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'The writing is part of a new life': An investigation into the academic writing practices of sixteen women pursuing research degrees in a university in the UK

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for Research in Education and Educational Technology, The Open University, UK

Submitted August 2018

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted to the Open University or to any other institute for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Abstract

This thesis reports on a study exploring the academic writing practices of sixteen women postgraduate research students in a UK university in the first two years of their research journeys. An emerging body of empirical work has focussed on the rhetorical features of postgraduate students' written texts such as the thesis, but less work has explored the range of writing that postgraduate writers do or their experiences of writing. A key dimension to such experience is that of gender and a key goal of the thesis is to explore the ways in which postgraduate writing can be considered a gendered practice.

The methodology involves a social practice approach, using ethnographic methods, including interviews, written texts, field notes and images to investigate the participants' writing and the contexts and relationships that frame their writing.

Findings in the thesis are presented in two ways: firstly, by recording and categorising the written texts that the students are producing in the first two years of their research qualifications, secondly in the form of a series of writing tales (from Lather, 1991). The use of 'tales' as an analytical unit and as a form of representation is the primary mechanism through which parts of the data are drawn together to foreground participants' stories about their experiences of academic writing. These tales draw attention to the significance of both occluded and more institutionally visible writing and represent the struggles and tensions the women experienced as developing researchers and writers.

This thesis contributes to knowledge in three key ways: 1) by extending the empirical base through the documentation of the range of postgraduate writing; 2) by illuminating the gendered nature of postgraduate research writing practices; 3) by demonstrating the significance of place and space to academic writing and the specific ways in which these are reinvented.

Publications arising from the research

McMullan, J. (2018). Becoming a researcher: Re-inventing writing spaces. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 32, 21–31.

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Thank you darling Leila. I know you will talk about a mother who didn't give you enough time in your early years, but I hope you will also talk about a mother who worked hard to accomplish something. I also thank mum and dad, Nola, Jenny, Bernard, Rachel, Naomi, Emily, Joel, Nelson, Joe, Clara and Alex for their continuing support and belief in me. I am deeply appreciative of our patient and loving families who live in France and Australia, and have rarely complained at our absence/s in their lives. There is no way I could have continued without the day-to-day, practical and emotional support of my family. Finally, I would also like to thank the Open University and the Economic and Social Research Council for the resources and funding required to carry out this study on the significance of gender on postgraduate research writing, and Doug and Louise for their editing support.

I understand that this tale will not be the same as the ones that follow. Each of us has different reasons for writing (and thinking) within a research degree and each of us has different circumstances affecting the choices we are able to make in our lives. However, what I can see in all the tales in this thesis is the centrality and importance of writing to personal and professional worlds – it is never just a text. Writing is a way of seeing, thinking and re-shaping futures.

Personal Reflection: Opening thoughts

In most books, the I, or first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; ... We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. (Thoreau, 1854/1984, p. xviii)

I was the first of three daughters in my parents' marriage. They would have three daughters (my twin sisters and I) by the time they were twenty-one and twenty-two. They were then divorced by the time I was four. Both parents remarried, though, in contrast to my father – and before and after my mother's second marriage - my mother managed as a single mother of three, and when my little brother arrived - a mother of four. In all, although I have a very loving relationship with my father and stepmother, as a teenager and a young adult many of the memories I hold of making 'intellectual' sense of the world around me - have my mother, and my relationship with her, at their heart.

My experiences of being in education, and of writing, began when I attended local state schools in Western Australia and then made the transition to a small, local university in 1990 – a new university which focussed on teacher-education. I left this university with a bachelor degree in Secondary Drama and English and a specialisation in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). My interests in literacy and higher education meant that I would continue with my studies and gain a Master's in Education at the University of NSW in Australia, and then continue on to research in the UK. Underlying many of my feelings about being a student and a writer are my memories of the long conversations I had with my mother, and my observations of her efforts to engage with university in Australia when she was a young woman and single mother of three small children. There were times, during my childhood, when my mother and I were in education together: I was at primary and then high school, while my mother took discrete modules at university. To my memory, my mother felt it was important for her to acquire an education - to have a Bachelor's degree. However, as a child, I remember how hard that was for her, and eventually she stopped pursuing 'formal' education before acquiring that illusive degree. However, she still had, and still has, a huge appetite for History, Philosophy and the Arts

and, daily, engages with resources that help her understand more about these bodies of knowledge.

My mother's background is interesting to me, because in many ways, I see her difficulties with completing and engaging in university subjects, despite what was a strong desire to be part of this 'world', to be enmeshed with the social and historical contexts in which she existed. Prior to my mother's initial attempt to engage with university (when she was 18) she had grown up on a farm in rural Western Australia with her mother and siblings. She had four siblings and a biological father who left the family farm permanently when she was a young girl. My grandfather moved interstate with a new partner. I have no memory of ever meeting my biological grandfather on my mother's side. My mother, after some time, gained a stepfather. By this stage, she was a young girl from the Australian bush, who had married (by the age of nineteen) and had three young children by the time she was able to consider higher education (HE). My mother's experience of entering tertiary education was not a comfortable one. I suspect she was in an environment that made little effort to accommodate her background and responsibilities, in fact, I have a vivid memory of my mother sitting at our kitchen table reading a long university enrolment record which showed repeated enrolments and withdrawals from university modules – and I felt, as a child, the pain she experienced as a result of this. My father, however, who had also had a family at a young age, had been able to complete a bachelor degree, an Honours (or research) year and had then been admitted into a PhD programme. As a Maths specialist, he later left his research studies to work in the blossoming IT industry in Australia. I have always been interested in the way that their experiences were different. For example, why was my father able to access the resources necessary to complete a university education and see the financial benefits this kind of education can bring, while my mother was not. My mother struggled to 'belong' at university – or at least in the science/medical courses she first took as a young woman. My father's honours thesis, in contrast, was always in our bookshelf – as a child, I was fascinated by this shiny mauve book with golden thread in its spine. I believe the general sense in our extended family is that he was professional and 'important' – this was demonstrated by the fact that our family have always gone to a great deal of effort to give him a lot of space to work – a large desk, big shiny furniture. While my mother, it seemed to me, attempted to study 'around the edges' of her day-to-day life or before and after the duties of motherhood.

My childhood has moments where I recall feeling that I was observing someone whom I considered to be bright and full of wonderful ideas be quietly defeated by the enormity of the effort required to study and work with a family. This of course, is not the full picture. My mother acquired a wonderfully rich, informal education informed by a huge array of second-hand books and publicly available audio-visual material. She paints and has a huge appetite for BBC documentaries. As a child, I recall having challenging discussions with her about the received interpretations of texts I was engaging with at school (in fact, there are times when I am convinced that it is these experiences that have provided me with the most 'education' in my life). I am sure the family responsibilities my father undertook meant that he too made sacrifices. Perhaps he would have finished his PhD, or chosen a different, more creative career if he had not had to shoulder the financial burden of two families. However, my family's story, along with those of other people who have been important to me, have convinced me there is still a story here that needs to be told – a story about the gendered nature of study, writing and intellectual work.

1 Introduction: postgraduate research writers and gender

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this introduction is to outline the theoretical and empirical parameters of this thesis which is focused on the academic writing practices of 16 women pursuing research degrees in a university in the UK. A pseudonym is used to refer to this institution throughout this thesis: the University of Southern England (USE) and the names of all of the participants have been changed. Other key details, which may reveal the identities of the participants, have also been anonymised.

I begin this Introduction by locating *postgraduate research writers* and their *writing*. In 1.2 I explain why I believe, along with other academic literacies researchers (see the review of the literature in Chapter 2) that it is important to observe and document the academic writing practices of postgraduate research writers. In 1.3 the importance of the notion of *gender* to this thesis is explained and defined. In 1.4 I then explain my reasons for exploring gender and academic writing through a critical realist lens and in 1.5 signal connections between critical realism and the Academic Literacies tradition (see, for example, Lillis and Scott, 2007). Section 1.6 outlines the three research questions, and, 1.7 provides an overview of the entire thesis.

1.2 Postgraduate research writers

Writing continues to be a key form of communication between students, teachers and scholars in higher education (HE) and takes on a particular significance at postgraduate level. This is evident in the way that research students use writing to engage with a range of different communities often by producing many different texts for diverse purposes (for full discussion of the range and types of written texts produced by postgraduate research writers in the formative years of their research degrees, see Chapter 4 of this thesis, *What do postgraduate writers write?*). In addition to the more commonly known text-types like the thesis or dissertation produced during postgraduate studies (see, for example, Flowerdew, 2015; Swales, 2004; Hyland, 2004; Charles, 2003) or the literature review (see for example, Flowerdew and Forest, 2009; Kwan 2006) postgraduate writing is often carried out to report on preliminary data analysis or on the progress of research (for

example, probation and progress reports which are discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis). Written texts may also be produced by postgraduate students for their peers and colleagues (for example, for 'work in progress' seminars); or specifically to acknowledge other scholars (see for example, Hyland, 2003, who examined acknowledgments in theses). Increasingly, postgraduate students may also write for publication (see Valerie's tale in Chapter 5, 5.6, of this thesis) or be required to advertise, or promote, their research to both professional academic audiences, as well as non-academic audiences (for example, 'research posters' and 'three minute thesis competitions' – see Jessica's writing tale in Chapter 6, 6.6, of this thesis which includes an example and discussion of a research poster). In summary, this thesis not only engages with the writing experiences of a group of students from a range of disciplines, but also with the different types of texts these students produce on a day-to-day basis, particularly in the formative years of their research degrees.

1.2.1 Defining postgraduate research writers

A postgraduate research writer, for the purposes of this thesis, can be defined as any student pursuing a higher degree, within which, a written research study is central. Although I engage with literature and statistics about research writing in other countries, this thesis can be located within the UK model of postgraduate research in which research students, from a range of disciplines, usually participate in one of two types of research degree pathways. The first model is a 2, 3 or 4-year PhD research qualification, often preceded by a 1 to 2-year Master in Research. The second model is a doctoral or professional degree framework (referred to at USE as an EdD – Doctorate in Education) in which there is a balance between modular type courses and research study (this type of research degree is often chosen by working professionals who find it practical to carry out research on a part-time basis). The Economic and Social Research Council in the UK (ESRC, 2015) fund a range of research degrees which are based on the first model. In a recent publication of the ESRC's 'Training and Development Guidelines' they have advertised different types of flexible funding for PhD students:

- *+3 programme – funding for a three-year PhD programme...*

- *1+3 programme – support for an integrated research training masters, which will deliver the majority of core training requirements*
- *2+2 programme – funding to cover an extended masters, followed by a shorter PhD programme*
- *+4 programme – up to four years funding for a PhD...*
- *2+3 programme – funding for extended masters training that may be required for specialist training (ESRC, 2015 p. 5)*

The ESRC's increasing recognition of the need for flexibility with regard to the ways postgraduate students engage with a research programme, is an indication of the individual and, often, specialised nature of carrying out a substantial research study. This means, in practice, the shape of a research student's postgraduate degree will vary according to the institution's (or faculty or discipline's) preferred mode of delivery.

When defining postgraduate research writers, it is also important to briefly look at what is considered *research* in higher education contexts. To do this I will introduce two extracts from formal definitions of research, each offered by research institutions which are involved in the allocation of funding for research, the UK's Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Australian Research Council (ARC). These two institutions are both from OECD countries which, according to OECD Research and Development statistics 2015, spend a similar amount of their GDP on research and development: as a percentage of their GDP's, 0.57% and 0.4% respectively (for discussion, see Crossley and Field, *The Conversation*, 2016). Both definitions outline several significant principles related to assessing the quality of research:

In the UK, HEFCE's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which evaluates research, states that research, for their purposes, is:

original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these

lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development. (RAE, 2001)

And the Australian Research Council (ARC) defines research as:

the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. (ARC Glossary, 2015)

In both definitions, there are two key criteria defining research. First, both institutions state that knowledge or *research* should be ‘new’ or ‘original’. Second, both institutions signal the process of drawing on ‘existing’ forms of knowledge or ‘synthesising and analysing previous research’, albeit also emphasising that such synthesis should be ‘new and ‘creative’. HEFCE emphasises the latter by highlighting the validity of using ‘existing knowledge in experimental development’ within research.

In line with the institutional definitions, throughout this thesis, postgraduate research writers are students who are engaging in an extended period of study and research in which they are expected to build on existing knowledge but also to contribute new knowledge in some specific ways. Their programme of study may consist of some directed coursework, but always includes research study in line with the above stated criteria. Throughout the data collection period of this thesis all of the participants were either pursuing a Master in Research (MRes), and/or were in the first half of their PhDs or a Doctorate in Education (EdD), all of which require – at a minimum - an undergraduate degree. Most were funded by institutions, although six were funding their own research degree. All of the research students had already completed at least one higher degree and 13 had significant professional experience in the workplace, with the exception of the three students in Science and Maths departments who had all pursued their postgraduate research qualifications relatively close to the completion of their undergraduate qualifications. All 16 students in this study were working towards completing their research degrees by producing a written thesis, although, it should be noted that an increasing

number of research students do acquire research degrees with a 'non-traditional' component. This can mean research students complete studies which are not written. For example, Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters (2013) published a monograph which explores the experiences of a range of research students and supervisors who were pursuing 'non-traditional' trajectories to higher research degrees. Engels-Schwarzpaul and Peters' edited collection included articles which reported on practice-led research degrees consisting of an assessable, non-written component such as performance or video. These include for example, Nepia's account of her doctoral journey: Nepia used a combination of dance, creative writing, performance, video and installation for her PhD. Specifically, she explains that her exegesis was presented as 'three interrelated volumes. Volume one, a compilation of video imagery and creative texts...offered a sensory introduction to the thesis. Other more "traditional" sections, including a review of knowledge and methodology chapter, were included in the other two volumes, together with a DVD of video and performance work (p. 21)'. Although, the experiences of research students who submit non-traditional forms of assessment are very important, the focus of the study on which this thesis is based is that of postgraduate students who were ultimately expected to submit a written thesis.

1.2.2 Why focus on postgraduate research writers?

There are several reasons for carrying out a study exploring the experiences and practices of postgraduate student writers. Firstly, the main research emphasis to date has centred on textual features of postgraduate assessed texts, such as the thesis. Whilst such work is important (as I discuss in Chapter 2) there is also need to broaden the analytic lens to explore the range of writing in which students engage at postgraduate level. Secondly, the significance of such texts to writers in the contexts of their research experiences more broadly merits attention and this thesis seeks to contribute to the small but growing work in this area (for example, Thesen and Cooper 2013; see Chapter 2). Thirdly, and related to this last point, an increasingly diverse groups of students are pursuing postgraduate research degrees: for example, postgraduate students who use English as an additional language (EAL) and are pursuing research degrees in English-medium teaching and learning contexts (see for example Phan Le Ha, 2009; Belcher and Hirvela, 2005); students who are the first in their family to achieve a university education (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002; Lillis, 2001); and students who seek to acquire a university postgraduate qualification as a mature student after decades of working as a parent or professional (Thesen and Cooper,

2013; Jancey and Burns, 2013; Uusimaki, 2011; Taylor and House, 2010; Vryonides and Vitsilakis, 2008). This means that the postgraduate research writing experience is necessarily a more complex phenomenon than is often acknowledged with some research students' experiences of writing being particularly painful and daunting, including concerns that they are disadvantaged from the outset because of issues related to 'language' or 'power imbalances' (Huang, 2010). Writing researchers have begun to investigate the reasons for the difficulties that postgraduate students face, but identifying such difficulties can be challenging as different perspectives are sometimes offered by research students, compared to the perspectives of those advising, teaching or supporting those research students. For example, Bitchener and Basturkmen's (2006) work illustrates how supervisors and advisors can have different perspectives on the issues causing difficulties with research students' academic writing: they explain that a student might say that 'language' is causing them issues with their academic writing, while their supervisor might disagree and attribute a different cause to these writing difficulties. Huang (2010) points out, that in some Taiwanese contexts, where advisors closely monitor research student's writings, the degree to which advisers become involved in postgraduates' professional writings can lead to tensions and conflicts (p. 40).

A focus on postgraduates' research writing is needed not only because of the challenges many postgraduate writers face, but also because both student writers and writing researchers need a greater understanding of the ways in which postgraduate academic writing practices are diverse and complex, both in terms of the written texts being produced, but also with regard to the social contexts in which postgraduate writing is being carried out.

1.3 Why focus on gender?

The study on which this thesis is based centres on the experiences of 16 women postgraduate research writers. A driving interest in carrying out the research was to explicitly seek to understand their experience as women research writers and to understand the potential significance of gender to their experience. There are several reasons for this interest, including my personal and family experience of the gendered nature of the possibilities for studying (see Opening Reflection), but also the well-documented gender inequalities in higher education.

The gendered material reality of higher education is most obviously evident in statistics on the employment status of male and female academics. Inequalities between men and women in terms of occupation, salary and status in academia are well documented. For example, according to HEFCE's 2017 Equality in HE report (Equality Challenge Unit, 2018), in the UK 'only 1 in 5 female academics earned over £50,000 (22.2% of female academics, compared to 35.6% of male academics)'. Statistics illustrating these inequalities in countries other than the UK present a similar picture. For example, a Thompson Reuters study (in Grove, 2013) explained that in Scandinavian countries women constitute 36.7% of academic staff in Sweden; 31.7% in Norway, and 31% in Denmark. The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2017) also report there are approximately twice as many men as there are women in positions considered to be 'above senior lecturer' in Australian higher education (10,768 and 5,151 respectively).

Research exercises conducted within HE, and statistics framing HE student participation, demonstrate how some dimensions of HE participation continue to be visibly gendered. In the UK, for example, it is relatively well known that academic writing which contributes positively to research assessments like the UK's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), or the more recently held Research Excellence Framework (REF), is a core asset. It may be less well known, however, that work published by men is more likely to be chosen for submission to these exercises. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE, 2009) 28% of eligible women were selected, compared to 45% of eligible men. HEFCE's conclusion stated that it is not so much 'a bias in the selection process' but '...a result of deeply rooted inequalities in the research careers of men and women' (HEFCE, 2009, p. 25). More recently, the 2014 REF also stated that 'gender equality within academia' needed to be 'improv[ed]' (EDAP 2015).

An examination of other areas of higher education practice, shows that there are still high-status subjects (for a discussion of what constitutes 'high-status' see, for example, Bleazby, 2015) which have significantly lower numbers of women than men. For example, in the 2016/2017 academic year, of all students in HE in the UK, 17,390 Computer Science students were women, while 83,710 were men. With regard to Engineering and Technology students in HE in the UK, 29,025 students were women, while 136,085 were men (HESA, 2017).

These brief basic statistics indicate that gender is a key dimension of HE in important ways. They also indicate that an area of HE practice which is linked to status, salary and promotion, notably, academic text production should be an important focus of research attention (see Chapter 2). Exactly where and how gender impacts on the kind of writing in which academic postgraduates engage - the early steps towards academic writing for publication - is a key focus in this thesis.

1.3.1 Defining gender

Whilst most contemporary studies of language adopt an orientation to gender as a social construct, in contrast to the use of 'sex' to signal a biological phenomenon, gender continues to be treated as a fixed category of a male/female binary and as an aspect of identity that is relatively stable (Cameron, 2005). This is most evident in the operationalisation of some studies of sex/gender: for example, in studies of academic writing for publication, gender is often operationalised as either 'man' or 'woman' and productivity measured against these two clearly, fixed categories (see for example Fox's study, 2005, on the publishing productivity of men and women in science; see review in 2.4). Whilst problematic, there is also good reason for treating gender in this rather fixed way, in that there are material conditions and consequences attached to being (identified as, living as) a woman or a man which are widely documented (see earlier discussion on gender inequalities in HE) and which are evident in studies of language and communication practices (see for example Hultgren, 2017; Threadgold, 1997).

In the study on which this thesis is based I use the category of 'women' postgraduate scholars to signal that there is a material reality attached to being a woman in contemporary society, although the specific nature of that reality and its consequences for individual women need to be explored rather than assumed. At the same time, this thesis draws strongly on work which defines gender as a socially constructed phenomenon that involves constant re-enactment. In *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* Judith Butler explains that her well-known text 'sought to uncover the ways in which the very thinking of what is possible in gendered life is foreclosed by certain habitual and violent presumptions' (Butler, p. 10, 1990). By drawing attention to the 'habits' and 'presumptions' that are attached to gender, one can see how gender is shaped by repeated behaviours and beliefs that occur over time within society, and that these behaviours and

beliefs have the potential to close down or open up choices and options individuals feel they have available to them. Butler frames gender as a social construct which is best understood in terms of actual practices –or performances (Butler, 1990), usefully noting the significance of gender in shaping practices but also as a site of potential individual agency. In this respect, it is important to note that Butler’s approach foregrounds the power of individuals to ‘rearticulate’ these socially constructed ‘norms’ (2004. P. 117). She argues that individuals can, and do, express gendered identities that are specific to them through these ‘rearticulation[s]’:

My view is that there are norms into which we are born – gendered, racial, national – that decide what kinds of subject we can be, but in being those subjects, in occupying and inhabiting those deciding norms, in incorporating and performing them, we make use of local options to rearticulate them in order to revise their power. (Butler in Reddy and Butler, 2004, p. 117)

Gender in this thesis therefore is treated as a socially constructed binary (male/female) which has material consequences. Thus, on the one hand, throughout this study gender is used to refer to the categories of male and female, in particular to refer to the participants as women postgraduates. On the other, gender is articulated as processes in which beliefs and habits are attributed to specific social and written practices. To signal the processual nature, the term *gendering* is used. Opportunities for agency within such processes, as signalled by Butler (1990) are of key interest and signalled throughout the writing tales in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis.

1.3.2 Where is gender in research on the writing of postgraduate research students?

The significance of gender to language and communication has long since been a focus of study in some disciplinary areas. For example, gender has received significant attention in Sociolinguistics with considerable work focussing on the ways in which gender is enacted in spoken communication (see for example, Swann 2002; Wetherell, 2002). Less attention has been paid to gender and writing in general, and academic writing in particular, although work in Academic Literacies has foregrounded the significance of gender as an aspect of identity which has an impact on undergraduate academic writing (see for example Lillis 2001), on academic writing for publication (see for example, Lillis and Curry, 2018) gender and the teaching of academic writing (see, for example Tuck, 2018; Horner, 2007; Orr and

Blythman, 2006). Themes raised in research on undergraduate academic writing, such as the significance of lived experience for academic writing have more recently begin to be explored in the context of postgraduate academic writing (see for example Thesen and Cooper 2013) and are briefly discussed below and in Chapter 2.

Whilst there has only been a limited focus on gender in studies of postgraduate academic writing, the significance of gender to academic and intellectual writing has been a key focus for feminist theorists in a number of ways. Postmodern theorists like Threadgold (1997), Weedon (2004) and Spender (1980) explore writing as an act of 'inscription' at a symbolic level, suggesting that gendered dimensions are evident in the writing and reading of texts whereby men and women are literally inscribed into the social order, in terms not least of roles, status and values. To make such inscription visible, some writers have re-written existing texts. This can be seen in the way that Threadgold, while introducing analyses of a series of historical texts related to the Governor Murders (reportedly, murders of several female family members in a white family, which were carried out by an aboriginal man in the early 1900s in Australia) articulates how she presents a re-writing of an historical event:

My concern here is with the rewriting across a period of almost a century, in many different institutional sites (the police, the media, the law, government, literature, film, tourism, pedagogy and the family) in many different genres and media of expression and by many differently embodied and coloured subjects, of the stories of the Governor murders in New South Wales in 1900 (1997, p. 134 and 135).

Irigaray, in contrast, analysed and advocated the writing of different types of texts to theorise about the ways in which women were written into (or not) traditional forms of writing. She did this by engaging in psychoanalytic theory and philosophy, looking in particular at the ways in which women are not represented in associated texts as separate, autonomous subjects (1993, 1996). Below, Lehtinen (2014) reflects on the significance of Irigaray's theories to actual writing practices:

A self-defined feminine subject can only be instituted if her first-person expressive and self-reflective acts extend to philosophical discourse. Traditionally, philosophy as the crystallization of the rational activity per se is defined as the most "human" or spiritual of all activities, but at the same time is also defined in contrast with

embodiment, woman, and the feminine. Ultimately, Irigaray questions this idea of philosophy and philosophizing with her explicit theses and through her performance as a feminine lover of wisdom (Lehtinen, 2014, p. 167)

Deutscher also usefully frames Irigaray's critique of philosophy and psychoanalytic texts as foregrounding the ways in which 'generated sedimented conceptions of women, materiality and femininity have come about in conventional texts' (Deutscher on Irigaray, 2002, p. 18), thereby pointing to the ways women and femininities are excluded from traditional, conventional texts. This is particularly true of academic texts which conventionally are premised on valuing the 'rational' dimensions to existence as compared with emotional or bodily dimensions (see Lillis 2001 for discussion of binaries governing academic writing).

Given the significance attached to gender in studies of sociolinguistics and communication more generally and the attention paid by feminist theorists on the ways in which gender is literally inscribed into the social order through writing practices gender seems an important, if relatively neglected, area of study in postgraduate academic writing. Gender in this thesis, then, is considered a concept which is grounded in biology, has material consequences and is socially constantly constructed and re-enacted. The underlying assumption behind the study and the thesis is that gender/gendering can be studied because it is inscribed into our observable social practices, including textual ones but necessarily involves interpretation which is underlined in this thesis with reference to a critical realist approach (see 1.4). Gender is not static, it is a constantly-changing, overlapping set of social and cultural practices which are constructed within and between individuals and institutions. In this thesis, traces of gendering as a social practice are made visible through participant interviews and journal entries

Gender, of course, is only one dimension to identity. There are other dimensions which intersect with gender in important ways (e.g. sexuality, age and ethnicity) and specific aspects that are signalled by the postgraduate research participants are foregrounded in the data-based chapters. These include age, professional and educational identities. I also draw on work that engages with gendering as a social practice, by for example using Barton and Hamilton's concepts of *roles* and *networks* (1998) to foreground the different ways gendering can manifest for individuals within communities. For example,

one might self-identify in a role as a lecturer in a local college, while also being deeply connected to the social practices that exist within one's own family network. This was the case for Alison, for example, who was a committed mother and carer in her family, while also being a lecturer for the local college where she lived. Both roles were important to her and this was clear throughout the interviews which were carried out with her (see Alison's tale in 6.3 of this thesis for a discussion of the significance of multiple life roles to her). I also draw on Moje and Luke's *identity as position* metaphor (2009, p. 430) to highlight the multi-layered and agentic nature of identities, including the ways that individuals are able to either 'resist' or 'accept' social labels (p. 430).

This thesis, then, is intended both as a contribution to understandings about postgraduate academic writing practices and perspectives generally, by documenting the range of writing in which postgraduates engage but also by specifically contributing to understandings of the ways in which the academic writing practices of women postgraduate research writers are gendered.

1.4 A critical realist approach

Researching any social phenomenon clearly involves significant challenges. The theoretical approach that underpins this thesis is critical realism. I now turn to an explanation of critical realism and explain why the notion is significant throughout this thesis, followed by a section which considers the connections between critical realism and the key writing tradition underpinning this thesis, Academic Literacies.

Critical realism as it is used within this thesis, draws on a philosophical perspective developed by Roy Bhasker and others (see Gorski's definition paper, 2013, p. 658). Critical realist researchers engage seriously with the idea that there is a material reality which can be observed and reported on but also emphasise that research can be used to report on 'deeper' (Banfield, 2004), and not necessarily observable, social structures including dimensions of power. This means that critical realism researchers believe it is important to engage in empirically descriptive research but also move beyond the immediately observable in order to gain a sense of the different mechanisms and structures which have brought about the more observable effects.

This thesis draws on recent discussions of critical realism, particularly where researchers have theorised about potentially productive relationships between feminism and critical realism (see, for example, Clegg, 2006; New, 2005) and ethnography and critical realism (see, for example, Sealey, 2007; Banfield, 2004). These lenses allow researchers to probe beneath empirical descriptions of sites which are significant to feminism, such as accounting for women's practices and experiences and make claims about the structures and institutions that underpin such experiences. For example, New (2005, p. 60 and 61) provides an excellent example of this by illustrating that 'footbinding [which] was experienced by millions of women in China between the mid tenth and early twentieth centuries (Feng, 199)' could be explained in terms of an 'event', but it is much more useful to understand both the event and the social mechanisms that underlie the event. Specifically, New argues that 'foot-binding' rather than being viewed as a fashion, should be viewed as a highly symbolic act which structured women's material and well as political position in society (New, 2005, p. 60 and 61).

Critical realism has particular relevance to academic writing in this thesis as I seek to describe and probe writing practices and perspectives. Adopting a critical realist lens enables me to ask questions about 'normative' practices and whose interests might be served by those practices (see Lillis et al. 2016). Lather (1991, p. 63) argues that: '...critical inquiry focuses on fundamental contradictions which help dispossessed people see how poorly their "ideologically frozen understandings" (Comstock, 1982:384) serve their interests'. In the context of this thesis this means that whilst I pay close attention to the participants' accounts and reflections on their experiences, there are also moments where I (as the researcher-analyst) highlight the significance of aspects of the participants' social reality that may be invisible, at least in the stated account, to the participant.

To illustrate, consider the following extract from an interview discussion with Jessica, a participant in the study. This extract from an interview has been included in order to demonstrate how a critical lens can be used to probe more deeply into data, particularly with regard to the unobservable social structures that underpin the relationships or activities which are being lived. The extract has been chosen to illustrate how the 'every-day' can be significant in developing an understanding of social structures and their

relationship to writing practices. Here we are talking about the different people around her and their attitude towards her postgraduate academic study:

Jenny: What about your husband, has he always been supportive?

Jessica: Very supportive. His philosophy is if I'm happy and quiet and no bother.

[Both laugh awkwardly]

Jessica: No, he's always supported me all the way in whatever I've wanted to do.

Jenny: Is he ever, I mean, every family is different - that's why I come with no assumptions with how it should be but, does he, for example, if you had to do some work on the weekend, does he ever pick up with the, did he used to, pick up with the cooking?

Jessica: Never

Jenny: Cleaning?

Jessica: No, he's um quite old fashioned in that respect. I'm the one that does the cooking, the cleaning, or I try to get them to help more now, but I do all the cooking, all the shopping for food [both laugh]. (Interview with Jessica, February 2013)

The extract is interesting because of both the discourse that I and Jessica use. I use the term 'supportive' to try and explore the attitude and practices adopted by Jessica's husband towards her and her postgraduate study in the context of their shared living arrangements. This discourse and question already implies that there may be a potentially negative orientation towards her study (it is interesting to note, for example, that I don't ask if he is interested, excited etc.) but it is clearly meaningful discourse to use in this context as Jessica responds offering specific contrasting comments. Jessica's emphatic statement 'Never', with regard to cooking, can be seen to contrast sharply with her comments about her husband being 'very supportive'. In the extract, Jessica explains that 'he's always supported me all the way in whatever I've wanted to do' but at the same time seems to suggest his support is conditional in some way on her being 'no bother'. The extract then suggests a number of tensions around the material conditions of her postgraduate study, as well as pointing to the widely documented fact of women continuing to be responsible for domestic labour whilst engaging in full time study and/or

paid work (see for example Craig, Mullan and Blaxland, 2010; Tomlinson, 2007; Craig, 2006).

I have used this extract to demonstrate that a critical lens allows me, as the researcher, to both accept and to probe comments by participants. While taking Jessica's claim that she is always 'supported' as a realist account of her experience, at the same time I interpret this account as signalling a gendered dimension to her experience (also see Jessica's tale in Chapter 6 in which she reflects on aspects of her family's attitude towards her research studies).

An interest within this study then has been to acknowledge and report on the (sometimes) invisible structures that constitute the social world. For this specific study, I am interested in foregrounding the social practices, which frame and contribute to the shaping of the academic writing practices which are carried out in UK higher education. That is, I am seeking to learn more about social practices and the ways they might be considered gendered, and how these practices interact might have an impact on, and shape, academic writing practices. I will now turn to a tradition within writing research, Academic Literacies research which has taken up a critical lens in a number of different ways.

1.5 Making connections: Critical realism and the Academic Literacies tradition

There are many researchers who have worked to make academic writing practices at different levels of university study more visible. Many of these have placed higher education students, or the academics who work closely with higher education students and their writing, at the heart of their research. Researchers who locate themselves within the Academic Literacies tradition foreground writing as a social practice and often use an ethnographic methodology in order to empirically explore writing as social practice (see Lillis and Scott, 2007; Lillis et al. 2016). Importantly, this ethnographic imperative enables Academic Literacies researchers to prioritise a focus on the lived reality of academic writing, rather than, for example, focusing on texts in isolation. At the heart of Academic Literacies teaching and research is the notion that individuals' experiences of writing should inform current knowledge of academic writing practices (also see Lillis et al. 2016).

A key connection between critical realism and Academic Literacies is the commitment to both empirical description, in particular paying attention to emic perspectives, and at the same time to exploring the structures and forms of power which underpin academic writing practices. Lea and Street (1998) explain this aspect of the Academic Literacies approach with the following:

This approach [Academic Literacies] sees literacies as social practices.... It views student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation. An academic literacies approach views the institutions in which academic practices take place as constituted in, and as sites of, discourse and power. (Lea and Street, 1998)

In their influential paper Lea and Street argue that the traditional focus on academic writing placing texts at the centre fails to recognise the significance of other dimensions:

the implicit models that have generally been used to understand student writing do not adequately take account of the importance of issues of identity and the institutional relationships of power and authority that surround, and are embedded within, diverse student writing practices across the university. (Lea and Street, 1998, p157)

Academic Literacies research has most commonly centred on academic writing at undergraduate level in higher education. Two key examples of such research which adopted an explicitly critical orientation are Ivanič (1998) and Lillis (2001) who focussed on the writing practices of undergraduate students and foregrounded identity as being an important dimension of writing at university. Both of these publications, framed within the problematics of widening participation in the UK, highlighted the struggles some undergraduate writers were having managing academic writing expectations and drew attention to the ways that the interests and desires of writers were sometimes being overlooked, or ignored. The students' interests and desires being overlooked led to tensions around students' writing when it came to navigating the wide array of both explicitly stated as well as hidden expectations related to academic writing in higher education. Lillis refers to such hidden expectations as 'institutional practice of mystery' (Lillis, 2001, p. 76), arguing that institutional practices disadvantage students who are from

social, linguistic and cultural backgrounds historically excluded from higher education and create 'discourses of deficit'. 'Discourses of deficit' refers to discourses in which individuals, or groups, are positioned as having faulty or limited knowledge about a topic (in this case academic writing) in part because they draw on backgrounds and experiences which may be different to dominant institutional conventions.

In addition to the work on student writing at undergraduate level (for overview, see Lillis et al. 2016; Lillis and Tuck, 2016) in more recent years Academic Literacies research has included studies centering on a range of practices: academics' writing for publication (e.g. Lillis and Curry, 2006), tutors' orientations to student writing (e.g. Tuck, 2012) and on the links between professional and academic writing (e.g. Rai, 2011) and are discussed in Chapter 2.

To a lesser extent Academic Literacies has also informed research into postgraduate writing see, for example Creaton (2016); Kaufhold (2015); Thesen and Cooper's edited collection (2013) and Creaton and Clements (2010). Key aspects researched to date include: the relationship between lived experience and academic knowledge making (Cooper, 2013); the ways that postgraduates' writing become increasingly aligned to the epistemological underpinnings of their respective disciplines (Kaufhold, 2015); the publishing practices of postgraduate students (see Huang, 2010); and postgraduate students' writing journeys (e.g. Phan Le Ha, 2009; Turner, 2003). This work is discussed more fully in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Importantly, very little work has explicitly explored the potential significance of gender to postgraduate students' academic writing practices, which has been a strong reason for the inclusion of gender as a significant area of interest in this thesis.

The Academic Literacies models of research have deeply influenced the study on which this thesis is based. This thesis actively works to offer richly contextualised accounts of writing drawing on multiple data sources and at the same time to illuminate the social contexts, and hidden structures that underpin, postgraduate research writers' academic writing practices, particularly with regard to the ways that these can be considered gendered.

I now turn to a discussion of the research questions which have framed this study into postgraduate research students' academic writing practices.

1.6 The research questions

The study on which this thesis is based centred on three main research questions.

1. What are the academic writing practices of postgraduate research students in the first two years of their research studies at a UK based university?
2. What are the perspectives of postgraduate research students about the writing they carry out while pursuing research qualifications?
3. In what ways is gender a significant dimension to postgraduate research students' academic writing practices?

The research questions centre on three keys aspects which are briefly outlined below. These aspects are also discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 in the context of existing research (Chapter 2) and methodologies (Chapter 3).

Writing practices

The term practice is used to refer to the range of academic writing activities, events and processes in which writers engage. It also underlines that such activities are always carried out within specific social and cultural contexts (see Street 2000 and 1984; Barton and Hamilton, 1998 and Barton 1994). Thus a 'social practices' approach to writing includes attention to written texts but also seeks to understand the significance of such texts in their specific context.

In conceptualising postgraduate research students' writing as social practice I draw on several theorists, notably, the foundational work of Brian Street (Street, 1984) who developed a model of literacy which challenged the dominant view of a single 'literacy'. He described the latter as an 'autonomous model of literacy' whereby literacy is framed as an independent, prescriptive entity which has 'effects on other social and cognitive practices' (Street, 2000, p. 7-8) and contrasted this with an 'ideological model of literacy' which:

starts from different premises than the autonomous model – it posits instead that literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill ... It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves

rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being. Literacy, in this sense, is always contested. (Street, 2000, p.7-8)

My aim with the first research question was to learn as much as possible about the specific writing practices of postgraduate students that is: the written texts that the postgraduate research students produce, the contexts in which these take place and the meanings attached to such texts by the participants. The specific ways that I have gone about this are discussed in Chapter 3 (Methodology).

Writer perspectives

The second research question focuses on the perspectives of participants about their academic writing. The notion of 'practice' sometimes incorporates attention to perspectives (see Street 1984), however it is useful methodologically to distinguish between writing activities and events and people's perspectives on those activities and events; the former may be captured through researcher observation for example, whereas the latter are usually captured through interview.

Researchers who use ethnographic methodologies foreground the importance of seeking to understand participants' perspectives in their representation of social phenomena.

Blommaert, a well-known linguistic ethnographer, describes this importance as follows:

good ethnography is iconic of the object it has set out to examine. It describes the sometimes chaotic, contradictory, polymorph character of human behaviour in concrete settings, and it does so in a way that seeks to do justice to two things: (a) the perspectives of participants – the old Boasian and Malinowskian privilege of the 'insiders' view'; and (b) the ways in which micro-events need to be understood as both unique and structured, as combinations of variation and stability. (Blommaert, 2007, p. 682)

Blommaert underlines that 'good ethnography' necessarily privileges the emic (see 3.6.1), that is the meanings participants attach to their lived experiences and practices of individuals, both as a way of understanding such experience and as a way of understanding how such 'micro-events' enact larger structures of society. Exactly what is meant by 'perspectives' is often left unarticulated but is understood within ethnography to refer to a

cluster of aspects, including people's accounts of events and expressions of their feelings and attitudes. Some work has begun to explore the perspectives of postgraduate writers as I discuss in Chapter 2.

The second and third research questions engage with an exploration of participants' perspectives on their academic writing which I explored through interviews and writing journals (see Chapter 3).

Gender

In 1.3 I defined gender as a concept which is taken up throughout this thesis. I explained that, although the notion has its roots in a male/female binary, throughout this thesis it is considered a socio-cultural concept which has material effects which can become visible through the representation of lived experiences. Following theorists like Butler, I understand gender to be a processual phenomenon, that is, something that is constantly enacted and worked at. Following Irigaray (1985) and Threadgold (1997), I also see gender as inscribed into our social practices, which include textual practices (see, for example 2013, p. 135 and Lillis, 2001, p. 81 and 115).

Investigating gender is a complex task. There are the conceptions the researcher brings to the research context about gender (or more etic oriented perspectives, see section 3.6.1 of this thesis for a discussion) and, in this study, there are the experiences and conceptions of the postgraduate writers, or participants (the emic oriented perspectives, see section 3.6.1). Lillis (2008, see for example p. 361 and 369) discusses some of the benefits and tensions around text oriented ethnographic work seeking to come closer to emic perspectives. Potential benefits to the research focus of this thesis include I-as-researcher actively working away from my own preconceived ideas of what 'gendering' might constitute. Therefore, I was interested in gathering information about the ways the participants talk about gender and how they saw the notion to be significant (or not) in their own experience of writing within higher education (the interview schedule is in section Appendix 2 of this thesis). I was aware that I would be making some interpretations of the significance of gender, based on the range of data collected. This dimension of analysing or 'reading' gender in the data links to the critical realism philosophy underpinning the research in this thesis. In 1.4 of this thesis I explained that adopting a

critical realism perspective sometimes meant probing beneath the stated, or the visible to understand more about the actual social structures (or powers) which inform and frame postgraduate writing.

The study on which this thesis is based has explored three dimensions of postgraduate students' academic writing: academic writing practices, writers' perspectives, and the gendering of academic writing. I now turn to a map of this thesis.

1.7 Thesis map

Chapter 1 introduced the study on which this thesis is based, the rationale for the focus on postgraduate student writers and the particular interest in gender, the research questions and the theoretical approach informing the study. Chapter 2 reviews four areas of literature which are closely connected to the Research Questions: existing research into postgraduate students' written texts; research into academic writing which has explored writer perspectives; research into academic writing and gender, and literature which has explored voice, gender and academic writing. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology which was used to carry out the study on which this thesis is based. First, the research questions are revisited, and then the epistemological positioning of this study is made explicit via a discussion of Lillis (2008) and Maybin's (1996) notion of the 'long conversation' and a clear description of what is meant by writing as social practice is presented. Chapter 3 also provides an overview of the data and discusses the ethnographically oriented methods in detail, which include texts, interviews, writing journals, field notes and images. I then turn to a discussion of the way that data was analysed and represented (section 3.6) explaining and justifying specific choices related to organising and categorising the data in an investigation into postgraduate research students' writing practices. In 3.7 I outline the ethics of the study, explaining how I not only adhered to my own university's ethics guidelines, but also BAAL and BERA requirements. Chapters 4 to 7 present findings from the study organised around three overarching themes: written texts, writing struggles, and place and space. Chapter 4 *What do postgraduate writers write?* and Chapter 5 *Writing tales: crafting texts* are focussed on postgraduate writers and their texts, documenting the number and range of texts produced and presenting five tales in order to illustrate individuals' experiences of writing specific kinds of written texts as research students. Chapter 6 *Writing tales: struggles around writing* uses the theoretical lenses of identity,

and Barton and Hamilton's (1998) role and network to explore specific struggles and tensions experienced by the postgraduate writers as they engage in research and academic writing. Chapter 7 *Writing tales: reinventing space* explores the significance of place and space to the writing practices of the participants in the study, drawing particular attention to the ways that place and space are effective lenses through which to illuminate the gendered nature of postgraduates' academic writing practices. The Conclusion chapter summarizes the key findings of this thesis structured around each of the initial research questions, outlines the key contributions of the thesis to the field of postgraduate academic writing and lists the limitations of the present study. This final chapter also considers future research directions arising from the study and briefly explores pedagogical implications.

1.8 Summary

In Chapter 1 of this thesis, I contextualised the study and explained why postgraduate writing remains an important focus in research into HE in the 21st century. Section 1.2.1 defines the group I am referring to when I use the label *postgraduate research writer*. Following these explanations (in 1.3) I explained the different ways that gender has been taken up in research, and that, for this study, although I work with a recognition of the material conditions of being a woman in academia and society, I also engage with the notion of gender as a socio-cultural practice – or as *gendering*. Next (in 1.4) I outlined this study's critical realist orientation and connections with the epistemology and methodology of Academic Literacies (1.5), which seeks to not only describe writing practices, but also understand the social structures and power relationships that underpin them. Finally, the research questions were introduced and the three main dimensions: academic writing practices, writers' perspectives and gender are defined (1.6). In 1.7, I offered a map of the entire thesis.

I will now review the literature which has contributed to this thesis and framed the ways in which I have engaged with the three research questions.

2 Review of the literature

2.1 Introduction

This review covers four key areas of literature related to the research questions driving the exploration of postgraduates' writing. Section 2.2. focuses on a prominent area of research into postgraduate academic writing, studies exploring the textual features of key postgraduate written texts, such as the thesis. Section 2.3 focuses on a growing area of interest in postgraduate research, that of exploring writers' perspectives and the meanings they attach to specific instances of their academic writing. Section 2.4 turns to review academic writing research which has explicitly focused on gender as a key dimension to academic writing. This section includes reviews of studies on gender and undergraduate writing, and gender and scholarly writing for publication. This broad coverage is necessary because of the limited research carried out to date on gender and postgraduate academic writing. It is also important to consider the potential relevance of research in these domains to understanding the significance of gender in postgraduate academic writing. Section 2.5 turns to consider research which has foregrounded voice in academic writing as a way of connecting the significance of identity to the writing of texts. This literature has been reviewed because, often, an important aspect of academic writing research which has engaged with gender has been that it makes connections with the notion of voice.

All literature reviewed has informed the study on which this thesis is based but some areas of the literature reviewed map more closely on to specific research questions outlined in Chapter 1 (see 1.6). Thus the reviews in 2.2 and 2.3 most closely map on to research question 1; the review in 2.3 maps on to research question 2; and the reviews in 2.4 and 2.5 map most obviously on to research question 3 but also to research question 2. At the end of each section I indicate which specific areas of the literature reviewed most closely connect with the focus of this thesis, and in the conclusion, I indicate how this thesis aims to contribute to the existing body of work on postgraduate academic writing.

It is important to note that, throughout this review, I have drawn on literature which has explored the written texts and writing experiences of postgraduate students from a range of linguistic backgrounds. Much of the existing research on postgraduates' academic writing tends to make a clear distinction between a focus on L1 or L2 writers (English as

first or second language) and whilst this is not a frame I adopt in this thesis, I consider work from both areas relevant to my attempt to track all available research on postgraduate writing and to a synthesis of existing insights and findings. Of course where the issue of using English as an additional language is raised by participants (as is the case with Cosima, see Chapter 6) its significance is acknowledged.

2.2 Research on postgraduate students' written texts

A prominent way in which postgraduate writing has been researched has been through a focus on the rhetorical and textual features of core postgraduate writing and is the focus of Section 2.2.

Much research into postgraduate academic writing has drawn on work by Swales (1990, 1981) to explore rhetorical structure. Swales underlined the existence of a basic IMRD (Introduction Methods Results Discussion) structure in much academic writing and focused on articulating key moves within this structure. For example, he proposed that there were specific rhetorical moves usually used for the introductions of research articles. Swales also developed the CARS (Create a Research Space) model, which has been widely discussed in research on academic writing (see for example, Charles, 2011; Kwan, 2006; Canagarajah, 2002). Other researchers have similarly focussed on aspects of the structures of theses (or 'macrostructure[s]' e.g. Thompson, 2005; 1999). Thompson for example, looked at PhD theses in Agricultural Botany and argued that there were both 'simple' and 'complex' IMRD frameworks (see 2005, p. 321). Similarly, Paltridge (2002) examined 30 theses across a range of disciplines and argued that there were four kinds of thesis: 'traditional: simple', 'traditional: complex', 'topic-based' and 'compilations of research articles' (2002, p. 125 – also see Thompson, 1999). The category of 'traditional: simple' is used in the literature to refer to theses which report on one study, while 'traditional: complex' refers to theses which report on a range of studies. These structural analyses of theses have provided rich sources of information for those interested in the rhetorical conventions of those texts which are traditionally assessed in postgraduate research study environments.

Rhetorical moves within core structures have also been explored, particularly the introductions and conclusions of theses. Bunton's investigation into 45 PhD theses argued that the majority of conclusions followed predictable steps. They were frequently found to

‘restate purpose, consolidate research space...recommend future research and cover practical applications, implications and recommendations’ (2005, p. 207). Literature reviews have also been a focus of attention (e.g. Flowerdew and Forest, 2009; Kwan 2006). Kwan (2006), for example, conducted a study to examine the ‘parts of the theses that occur between the introductory and methodology chapters’ (p. 3), in this specific context, this refers to the parts of 20 theses in which literature were reviewed. These were theses produced by students pursuing doctoral qualifications in linguistics in several different countries. Kwan suggests (Figure 7. P. 51) that, there are certain moves which each writer aims to achieve in the body sections of their literature reviews: ‘Establishing one part of the territory of one’s own research’; ‘creating a research niche’ ‘occupying the niche’ (p. 51). Kwan concludes by arguing that the introduction chapter ‘may have a more macro function of creating the research space for the thesis in more general terms’ (p. 52).

Other researchers have examined less commonly discussed parts of a thesis, such as acknowledgments (e.g. Hyland, 2003). Hyland investigated the dissertation acknowledgments of 20 MA and 20 PhD dissertations from six academic areas. Hyland (2003) argues that acknowledgments conform to patterns which are disciplinary in nature. For example, expressions of gratitude to supervisors and academics were most common in science subjects like Biology and Engineering (p. 254). Hyland and Tse (2004) similarly examined acknowledgements in dissertations arguing that such acknowledgements reflect careful thought of both disciplinary contexts and strategic, career oriented considerations.

In addition to work on rhetorical organisation of theses or parts of theses, a considerable number of studies have focused on specific micro discourse features, such as the personal pronoun, or, more commonly in postgraduate writing on a cluster of micro features referred to as ‘metadiscourse’ (see below). The personal pronoun has been researched extensively, predominantly in undergraduate writing (see Lee and Chen, 2009; Hyland, 2002; Tang and John, 1999) for a number of reasons, including the stated struggles by writers around the use/non-use of the first person (see for example, Luzon, 2009; Gimenez, 2008; Martinez, 2005) and the obvious link between pronoun use and writer identity (for discussion, Ivanič and Camps, 2001 and Clark and Ivanič, 1997). Less work on personal pronoun use has been carried out on postgraduate research writing, but the work which has been carried out to date (for example, Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, 2017; Afsari and

Kuhi, 2016; Starfield and Ravelli, 2006, and Harwood, 2005) echoes themes raised in studies on undergraduate contexts on the use of the first person: for example, Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, (2017) contrast the use of the first person pronoun 'we' by L2 English language users in Engineering with use by L1 student; and Starfield and Ravelli document the ways in which choices around the use of 'I' can be a deliberate authorial strategy in Humanities to inhabit the text with a 'reflexive self' (Starfield and Ravelli, 2006 p. 222).

Much text-based analysis of postgraduate written texts has focused on 'metadiscourse'. 'Metadiscourse' is a term applied in linguistics and language oriented research to refer to those words which are used in written or spoken language to organise texts; express authors' relationships to ideas or notions, or relationships between ideas or notions. Flowerdew, drawing on Hyland (2005) captures the organisational and interpretive potential of metadiscourse with the following: 'metadiscourse...guide their readers through the unfolding discourse and [their purpose is] to engage [readers] in understanding and interpreting the text' (in Flowerdew, 2015, p. 59). Researchers take different approaches to categorising and labelling the specific functionality of metadiscoursal features: for example, Hyland (2004) and Hyland and Tse (2004) argue that metadiscourse is primarily interpersonal, whereas others foreground the role of metadiscourse in expressing logical or semantic relations. Basturkmen and von Randow (2014) for example focus linguistic categories such as 'code glosses' (words used to 'explain, rephrase or illustrate textual material' - p. 18) and 'logical markers' (markers seen as 'express[ing] semantic relationships' - p.18).

Hyland (2004) investigated metadiscourse in a study of Masters and Doctoral dissertations written by postgraduate students in Hong Kong. He examined 'metadiscourse' in 240 dissertations (p. 133). The dissertations were 'scanned to produce an electronic corpus of four million words, 2.6 million in the PhDs and 1.4 million in the Masters texts' (p. 136). Hyland's model (see p. 139) includes two categories of resources: 'interactive resources', and 'interactional resources'. The interactive are those that work to organise the text, for example, transitions such as 'In addition, but, thus, and' (see p. 139) and interactional are those which he argues 'involve the reader in an argument' including, for example, hedges like 'might, perhaps, possible, about' (see p. 139). Hyland found that social science disciplines tended to use more metadiscourse than the other sciences (see p. 144), and

that Master's students tended to use more interactional discourse while doctoral students employed 'substantially' (p. 141) more interactive ones. Hyland points out that, overall, students tended to use 'slightly more interactive than interactional forms' with the students using 'hedges' and 'transitions' most commonly across all of the written texts. Hyland draws attention to the different discursual practices evident in the data. For example, Business Studies postgraduate dissertations were reported as having 224.7 instances of 'interactive metadiscourse per 10, 000 words' while Biology had 267.6. A larger difference can be seen between instances of 'interactional metadiscourse' per 10, 000 words, where Applied Linguistics used 551.6 and Business Studies used 435.8. Hyland argues it is important to analyse texts in relation to their social, and hence disciplinary, contexts because this analysis enables students to participate more easily in specific discursual communities, in that the current textual practices are made more explicit (which he argues can be done in the form of expert exemplars of dissertations - p. 148 and 149).

A similar approach was adopted by Basturkmen and von Randow (2014) who analysed twenty samples of postgraduate writing (argumentative writing tasks given to all postgraduate students at a university in New Zealand) with a view to understanding more about the relationship between metadiscourse and what constitutes coherence in texts that were of the same genre (p. 14). The writing came from postgraduate students situated in different disciplines including 'Arts, Engineering, Education and Business' (p. 17). In their research they compared how the postgraduate student writers used 'textual metadiscourse' (for example, phrases which expressed 'illocutionary intent' like 'This article identifies...' or 'argues that...' – see p. 18) and 'concessive relations' both in relation to, and not in relation to, discourse markers (see p. 19). Basturkmen and von Randow use Thompson and Zhou's 2000 definition of concession which they report as 'the writer presenting two propositions as being valid, but the second is presented as in some way more valid than the first' (2014, p. 18). The main findings of Basturkmen and von Randow's research were that the 'textual metadiscourse' feature 'code glosses' (words used to explain, rephrase or illustrate textual material' - p. 18) and 'logical markers' (markers seen as 'express(ing) semantic relationships' - p.18) were identified as occurring most frequently in the postgraduate students' written texts. Von Randow and Basturkmen found that the students' texts which had been awarded the highest marks used a 'wider range of signals of concessive relations and some instances of concessive relations without signalling'

indicating that not using signalling for concession may be indicative of mature 'argumentation' (p. 21).

Charles (2011), reported on rhetorical conventions in two corpora of theses in Politics and Materials Science ('190 000' and '300 000' words respectively) related to adverbs (p. 47). Charles employed both discourse analysis as well as corpus techniques (p. 47). In her findings she states that the adverbial which was employed the least was 'in consequence/as a consequence' while the adverbial used the most was 'thus' (p. 50). In the paper she looks closely at how the adverbials are applied within problem-solution patterns, and suggests more attention could be given, in pedagogical contexts, to the more frequently used adverbials (e.g. thus, therefore and then).

Section 2.2 has looked at a range of studies which have investigated the textual features of research students' postgraduate writing. Key areas of work include the structural dimensions of the more commonly assessed texts like the thesis or dissertation, and the rhetorical moves of core parts of the thesis or dissertation. Some work has been carried out on less well-known parts of research texts like acknowledgements which draws attentions to disciplinary conventions and the strategic professional and career oriented decisions writers make when crafting acknowledgments. Section 2.2. also provides an overview of the range of work that has been carried out on personal pronouns and features of metadiscourse. For example, Hyland pointed out (2004) that, overall, students tend to use 'slightly more interactive than interactional forms', while Charles looked at the linguistic construction of problem-solution patterns, and suggested more attention be given, in teaching and learning contexts, to the more frequently used adverbials. Each study mentioned in 2.2. offers valuable insights into the textual features of postgraduate writers' texts in the later, or summative years of the students' postgraduate trajectories.

This thesis does not centre on textual features but draws on existing text based literature by foregrounding aspects of textual conventions that are significant in the experience of individual writers. For example the use of the first person is seen as significant in Valerie's writing tale and reflects the changing relationship she has to science and the academic world in which she is a postgraduate student (5.6). There were also tensions for Pippa regarding the extent to which she felt she was able to use her personal experience, and, relatedly, the first person, 'I', in her writing (see Pippa's writing tale, 5.3).

Where this thesis connects most strongly with text-based research on postgraduates' academic writing is in the attention paid to text types (Chapter 4). The overreaching focus in text-based studies is on institutionally visible texts, such as the thesis. This thesis seeks to extend the existing literature on text oriented studies by providing an empirical account of the range and amount of texts which postgraduate students engage, and to underline in particular both occluded and visible genres.

I will now turn to a discussion of literature that centres on writers' perspectives which is of more central concern in this thesis.

2.3 Research on writer perspectives

In addition to research on textual features of postgraduate academic writing, some researchers have turned their attention to exploring the perspectives of postgraduate writers on their academic writing. Such studies aim to generate insights into the experiences and practices of postgraduate writers, including the impact of disciplinary discourses on their writing and the specific ways in which supervisors', advisors' or tutors' perspectives on postgraduates' writing differ from postgraduate writers' perspectives.

The ways in which three 'continental European' students negotiated their backgrounds and wrote Masters theses within a social science department in a UK university were explored by Kaufhold (2015). She found that while writing their theses, students' initial understandings of academic English conventions as autonomous rules 'became increasingly dependent on their disciplinary knowledge and the epistemological approaches of their theses' (Kaufhold, 2015, p. 125). Kaufhold also reports that although connected to the traditions of their respective disciplines the students found that academic writing conventions were more flexible than they first thought, even though connected to the traditions of their respective disciplines (p. 132). Interestingly, she points out that, in addition to writers drawing on their specific academic writing backgrounds to negotiate the texts they were required to write, they were also motivated by ideas of being specific kinds of writers in the future, whether that be in academic or non-academic contexts (p. 132). Kaufhold also draws attention to the thesis as a tool for assessment and explains that the students were conscious of the 'conserving functions of the institution of higher education where the thesis is an assessment' (Kaufhold, 2015, p. 132).

Similarly, Li and Wang (2008) used a qualitative approach to interview 11 students pursuing PhDs or professional doctoral or masters' qualifications at an Australian university. The data were collected over one year and Li and Wang found that the students who had used English in their studies in their country of origin seemed to have more confidence in their postgraduate writing initially, but that all of them 'gained confidence' towards the end of their postgraduate studies (p. 92). All students exhibited an awareness of differences between academic writing in their countries of origin and the writing required of them in their Australian universities. Not unlike Kaufhold (2015), Li and Wang refer to a 'conscious shift' undertaken by students with regard to their academic writing which enabled them to accommodate new practices (p. 93). Li and Wang (2008) draw attention to the fact that overseas students studying in English-medium universities often find themselves needing to change the ways they are accustomed to writing academically and this happens over time.

Staying motivated while writing complex genres like qualitative theses can be a challenge and research which has sought to explore writer perspectives has the potential to provide insights into this area. Belcher and Hirvela (2005) drew on Bandura's notion of self-efficacy beliefs to explore the experiences of 'L2' writers who have chosen to engage in qualitative dissertations (they refer to these as 'fuzzy genres' – p. 187). Each student, who had completed a dissertation, was interviewed for between one and three years. One of the central issues they were interested in concerned the factors that kept a student motivated, and sustained them throughout their dissertation writing experience. They argued that three of their six participants had motivations which were intrinsic and the other three were 'pragmatic, topic driven, extrinsically oriented' (p. 201). Their findings drew attention to the fact that L2 writers are not necessarily disadvantaged when it comes to writing qualitative texts (compared to texts which report on quantitative data) and that both extrinsic and intrinsic forms of motivation are legitimate forms of motivation which can lead to the successful completion of a thesis.

Some studies focus specifically on supervisor as well as postgraduate student perspectives on specific parts of written texts. For example, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) conducted interviews with four student-supervisor groups in order to understand more about the difficulties postgraduate students experience with writing 'discussion and results'

sections. The postgraduate writers in the study were all referred to as 'non-native English speakers of English (NNES)' and were pursuing PhDs or post doctorate qualifications in science disciplines. Bitchener and Basturkmen's findings signal that there are some important issues at play when students are writing postgraduate texts in their particular contexts. For example, they argue that student and supervisor perceptions of writing difficulties frequently did not match, and that three out of four supervisors did not agree with postgraduate writers that 'language' is a concern for the L2 postgraduate writers (p. 14). These findings illustrate the importance of studying both students' and readers' (for example, tutors' and supervisors') perspectives and roles within academic writing at postgraduate levels and the importance of not assuming there are shared understandings of the challenges of academic writing.

Huang (2010) investigated the experiences and perceptions of a group of Taiwanese postgraduate students who were publishing in English, and drew attention to the potential effects of imbalanced power relations on writing for publication. Huang argued that these differences could affect the students' sense of 'ownership' (p. 39) of their texts and their 'autonomy and the will to learn' (p. 40). Huang, delivers powerful testimony to this notion with the following quote from one of the study's participants:

The PhD students in Taiwan have very low autonomy ...Why? Because since the boss always dogmatically controls everything, it means that the students under the boss have no power. No power means no responsibility... so when [the boss] deprives the students of power, they don't have responsibilities anymore...Because the boss makes all the decisions, the boss would take on that responsibility of failure. Then what do the students need to take on? All they do is to follow the boss right? This is a serious problem. (Huang, 2010, p. 40)

Huang's study demonstrates the importance of research which investigates the reality of writing in specific contexts and the potential power of some individuals over postgraduate writing practices, most obviously supervisors, advisors or tutors. In this case, Huang demonstrates that the restrictions felt by some postgraduate writers, as a result of power imbalances with their advisors, were having tangible and negative effects on their writing productivity. In addition, Huang highlights the fact that supervisors, in this specific context at least and according to some of her participants, tended to give a great deal of attention

to 'language' editing rather than being concerned with the ideas or research presented in their theses.

This strand of research focusing on writer perspectives serves to foreground the ways in which research students' perspectives about their writing change over time (see, for example Li and Wang, 2008) including, the ways in which they engage with disciplinary writing practices (Kaufhold, 2015). The literature also highlights the fact that supervisors' and students' perspectives of writing can be different to one another (see for example, Bitchener and Basturkmen, 2006). In fact, Chiu and Huang (2015 and 2010) demonstrate that supervisor, advisor or tutor and student relationships can have tangible and significant effects on research students' writing practices and productivity. Research into writers' perspectives also points to the significance of both internal and external forms of motivation to students as they write qualitative dissertations, regardless of their language backgrounds (see for example, Belcher and Hirvela, 2005). All studies signal the significance and impact of the contexts of the writing that is being carried out in terms of both the people and circumstances in which research academic writing takes place. This is a theme that can be seen throughout the writing tales presented in this thesis: for example, in Pippa's writing tale (5.3) she expresses confusion as to what academic discourses should look like in her discipline. In this tale, she expresses a desire for more assistance from her supervisors, but feels unable to ask for this guidance. The effects of the relationships between more senior academics, supervisors and students around postgraduate research students' writing and the specific development of certain texts can also be seen Valerie's tale (5.6); Jessica's tale (5.7); Cosima's tale (6.7); Yasmin's tale (7.6) and Clara's tale (7.7).

The writing tales in data chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis, then, add to the literature investigating the writing perspectives and practices of research students by focussing on written texts produced during the formative years of postgraduate degrees, and illuminating the significance of specific dimensions of academic texts to students.

Connections between the literature reviewed and this thesis are evident in the ways postgraduate writers can be seen to be attempting to align themselves with disciplinary conventions (see for example, Pippa's Writing Tale 5.3) as well as navigating supervisors' and advisors' implicit or explicit expectations (see for example, Jessica's Writing Tale 5.6).

I will now turn to a review of relevant research which has explicitly foregrounded the significance of gender, drawing on work carried out in a number of domains of academic writing.

2.4 Research on academic writing and gender

This section reviews research which has foregrounded gender as an explicit dimension to academic writing. Given that limited research has been carried out on gender and postgraduate academic writing, the review engages with work exploring the significance of gender in related domains, that is in undergraduate student academic writing and in academic writing for publication. It is important to note that the studies reviewed vary in terms of domain - undergraduate or professional writing for publication - but also in terms of how 'gender' is operationalised, with some researchers treating gender as an aspect of being that is constantly re-enacted, and others working with quite fixed notions of gender, identifiable by for example a person's name (see below for further discussion).

2.4.1 Gender and undergraduate student academic writing

A small number of studies have explicitly focused on the construction of gender in academic writing practices. Haswell and Haswell's widely cited study (reported on in 1995 and 1996) explores the ways in which students and lecturers construct gender in their reading of anonymised essays. In their study participants were asked ('sixty-four male and female tutors and students...thirty-two tutors and thirty-two college-level students', 1995, p. 225) to critique two college essays: 'By "critique," [they meant] an act of appraising a piece of student writing still in draft stage, with intent to foster improvement in the writing - as in the term "peer critique"' (p. 224). In their study, they employed a range of criteria to test for 'gender bias'. These criteria included the clues the reader (or marker) gave about whether he or she thought a writer was a man or woman; the positive criticism in the participants' critiques; indications of 'authorial agency' (or who the reader refers to as the author - for example, 'he', 'she' or gender neutral references) as well as what the readers (or markers) consider to be 'normal' academic writing (1996, p. 69). Haswell and Haswell, then, not only observed whether readers referred to authors as male or female when critiquing anonymised academic texts, but also recorded whether the readers thought elements of the text were positive or negative. Haswell and Haswell argue that the consequences of these judgments are important to pedagogy:

For better or worse, whether they know it or not, teachers shape gender identities as well as writing skills ... it's time that teachers own up to their gendered rewriting of student texts, and begin to understand it in terms of what the writers want to accomplish. It isn't unprofessional that our eight female teachers disliked Victoria's essay. But it is uncritical that they treated it like bad writing when they really disliked it because to them the woman behind the writing sounded like a man or because she did not match their expectations that female students write better than male students... They must leave Kevin (and men like him) free to speak honestly about interest in family ties and personal relationships or to prefer a narrative to an argumentative mode. (Haswell and Haswell, 1995, p. 252)

Haswell and Haswell argued that most of their participants 'spontaneously' formed a picture of the author's gender (1996, p. 69 and 70) – here they are referring to the fact that readers in their study gave an indication of the sex of an author even when there was no clue within the text of the sex of that author and the name and sex of the author is withheld (e.g. 1996 p. 233 and 1995 p. 69-70). Haswell and Haswell also claim that female teachers tended to lower a rating (or grade) when they knew a text's author was another woman (1996, p. 70) and, conversely, female students tended to give higher marks to men's writing when they knew a text was written by a man (1996, p. 70). They also argued that men were often constructed, by the participants as:

independent, confident, and egotistical' and females as 'dependent, insecure, and connected with what other people think' – these stereotypes, they argue, were carried into the ways the participants expected men and women to write. (Haswell and Haswell, 1995, p. 233)

As a result of their research, Haswell and Haswell developed the notion of 'gendership' (1995), meaning ideas of gender are something constructed by both the writer and the reader of a text.

In a similar way, Read et al. (2004, p. 220) emphasise the construction of gender as an active process around academic writing: 'Crucially, the reading self impacts on the construction of the text' and 'Moreover, such understanding is not only culturally specific, but is deeply influenced by the reader's social positioning and identities within this culture,

including their gender'. Read et al. (2005 and 2004) were interested in exploring tutors' reading practices and to consider the extent and ways in which these might be gendered. They reported on a study in which the authors recruited one hundred tutors and lecturers in psychology and history to blind mark and grade two sample essays (one by a female student and the other a male student) in their discipline and each tutor-participant was interviewed about their views of these essays. The researchers then looked at differences between the views of the women in the study and the views of the men. The main findings were that even though there were many similar views (e.g. both the men and women in the study 'prioritise' aspects of structure and writing style over aspects of content), more women valued 'effort and presentation' while more men prioritised issues around 'argument' (p.232). Read et al.'s study contributes to discussions regarding the construction of gender in that it provided insights into characteristics of writing, and perceptions of writing, which might be considered gendered.

Lillis (2001) drew on a study she had conducted which explored the academic writing experiences of women who were in the first and second years of their undergraduate studies in the UK. She dedicates one chapter of her book to a discussion of gender and how the notion has been significant to the participants in her study. Lillis' analyses of undergraduates and their texts draws attention to the ways in which 'essayist literacy' can be considered gendered and restrictive. Lillis does this by foregrounding feminist critique which argues 'essayist literacy' can be considered as a set of 'binaries' (Lillis 2001, p. 81 and 115) meaning the essay is predominantly an exposition of an argument which is linear and values certain rhetorical moves over others (p. 81 and 115) e.g. 'logic over emotion' or 'academic truth (published theory and research) over personal experience' (Lillis, 2001, p.81). She illustrates through student participant accounts how this binary is experienced and how many desire to write across the binary and include, for example emotion as well as logical argument in their academic writing (Lillis, 2001, Ch 5). Lillis's work on gender is part of an Academic Literacies approach centering on the significance of identity in academic writing and using 'voice' as a way of anchoring perceptions of identity to the written text, an area of work I return to below (see 2.5).

2.4.2 Gender and academic writing for publication

The question of gender related to academic writing has been foregrounded recently with a particular focus on the frequency with which men and/or women are published in peer-reviewed academic journals. In such studies, gender is treated as a fixed category, often operationalised on the basis of name.

Research has been carried out, for example, which focusses on the productivity of professional academics who are also parents. Fox distributed surveys to academics in 'academic science' to investigate the writing productivity of parent-researchers (2005). Fox had a 65% return rate on a total of 1215 surveys sent to science faculties in doctoral granting departments in the United States (p. 132 and 133). She gathered information from 'full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty...in computer science, chemistry, electrical engineering, microbiology and physics' (p. 132) and found that women who were married to partners who were in 'science' and who were in 'subsequent' marriages (see p. 133 for a description of the variables used for the study) were more productive with publications than women in first marriages. She also found that female scientists with pre-school children (compared to having, for example, children at high school) were more productive than other parents (p. 140), and that more women in science than men had no children: 'In family composition, the predominant pattern for women scientists is that of 'no children', found among 52% of women (compared with 21% of men)' (Fox, 2005, p. 145). Interestingly, her research was able to illustrate that 'the productivity of men varie[d] less by family composition than [did] women' (p. 140).

There are certain disciplines and industries which are gendered and, this in turn, has potential effects on academic cultures and writing practices. For example, the Design Economy reports (2015) that 78% of people who work within the UK's Design economy are men. Clerke (2010) explored the publication rates of men and women in design in two high-status design journals (one published in the United States and one in the UK) (p. 70). Clerke identified the gender of the author by their names and through additional research where possible (personal communications, August 2015). Articles where the gender of the author/s were not clear were not included in her study (Clerke, 2010, p. 70). Clerke illustrated that for the two journals she studied, '...statistically men are far more likely to be published, and published as single authors, than women, while articles co-authored by men

are published more often and generally involve more authors per article than those co-authored by women' (p. 75). Clerke also demonstrates that men held most of the 'editorial positions' in key journals in Design (for example, p. 75). Although, this may be a reflection of the gendered nature of the industry, it is important to be aware of the impact of this gendering on academics and their writing.

Boice and Kelly (1987) used questionnaires to ask Psychology academics and teachers at colleges and universities in the United States about the pressures they felt around publishing. They too focussed on productivity but also asked the participants about their experiences of publishing as academics. To do this, they asked their participants how many books and scholarly articles (p. 308) they had published in a three-year time period, how they felt about their communications with editors of academic journals, and what they believed about the representation of men and women on editorial boards of journals (p. 305 – 307). The main findings were that although the men and women who participated in the study were equally productive, the women in their study tended to feel greater 'discomfort' and 'anxiety' about these pressures (p.299 and p. 304).

Fox's work drew attention to the fact that men's writing careers tended to be less affected by 'family composition' than women, while Clerke's study demonstrated that, in general, more men tended to be published than women in the key Design journals she studied. Boice and Kelly found, in contrast, that men and women were equally productive but that women tended to experience more anxiety related to their writing. These findings align with more recent work into the publishing practices of women and men and the potential impact of 'auditing practices' of academic publishing on what is often referred to as a gender gap – a phenomenon where men are seen to be publishing more frequently, and with a greater 'impact' than women (Nygaard and Bahgat, 2018, p. 67). Nygaard and Bahgat (2018) explore publication and citation practices in the Norwegian context drawing attention to the fact that depending on the actual data used, the 'gender gap' can look quite different. For example, they re-analysed publications data on academic publications across Norway and found that:

taking into account leaves of absence increases women's productivity by about 12%, compared to a 4% increase for men (see Table 8). This is consistent with our

assumption that women in Norway take longer leaves of absence than men, and that absence has an impact on productivity... (Nygaard and Bahgat, 2018, p. 67).

Methodologically, it is important to note that the authors used slightly different strategies to identify gender in their studies: Fox, for example, drew on a national mail survey that had been used to gather a range of background data on academics and Clerke identified author's gender through the names they had published and wherever she was able to do additional research. However, all the writers discussed above, were working with quite fixed notions of gender in order to seek to quantify a particular type of academic output.

In contrast, some work on writing for publication foregrounds the constructed nature of gender enacted in everyday encounters and practices. For example, the gendered nature of women academics' research and writing trajectories are illustrated through the constraints under which women scholars work as well as the ways they manage to enact agency and desires are illustrated in Lillis and Curry (2018) and Thieme and Saunder (2018, p. 82) who argue, for example, that conventional academic writing and citation practices, can be seen to lead to the 'erasure' of transgender scholars.

Whether gender is explored as a fixed or processual category, findings from the research on academic writing for publication support the claim that the conditions within which women write in academic contexts are challenging. They indicate that, in Design, men still tended to hold most of the senior positions as journal editors (Clerke, 2010); that women may feel greater 'discomfort' and 'anxiety' about the pressure to produce written texts (Boice and Kelly, 1987, p.299 and p. 304); and importantly, that, men's writing productivity was far less affected by the family composition than women in science (Fox, 2005). Lillis and Curry (2018) also found, through an exploration of women scholars' careers and writing experiences that their participants' writing lives were gendered in the sense that they experienced certain constraints around their academic writing and often expressed desires to engage with their writing differently.

This section has reviewed work which explicitly considers the significance of gender in academic writing, drawing attention to the ways in which gender is constructed and taken-up by readers and writers of academic texts (see the literature on gender and undergraduate writing) and the impact of social structures like family composition and

leave requirements on writers of academic texts (see the literature on professional writing for publication). Consequently, the importance of this literature lies in the way it directs attention to the material effects (both potential and actual) of gendered academic writing practices; and the fact that the gendering of these practices has real effects on careers and on individuals' day-to-day lives. Connections can be seen in the thesis in the ways that the postgraduate research students had family and personal responsibilities that they managed on a day-to-day basis in order to write academically (see for example, Pippa's tale in 6.4, Aisha's tale in 7.4 and Cosima's tale in 7.5)

2.5 Voice, gender and academic writing

Whilst gender has received relatively little attention in research on academic writing, the importance of experience and identity have increasingly received attention, particularly through the notion of 'voice'.

Voice [is] used in writing research to signal connections between people's sense of identity, the content and form of what they write, and their capacity for what they understand to be key aspects of all three to be recognised or taken up. Voice is sometimes used to signal the person/groups of people (for example the voices of women poets) and sometimes refer to what is said. It can be used to signal a strong authentic self, or to signal multiplicity of selves. (Lillis, 2013, p. 126 and 127)

Lillis' definition of voice above captures the different strands of voice that are taken up by different researchers into academic writing. As Lillis explains, some researchers focus on voice in relation to individual identity and some in relation to group identity.

In this section I explore the research on voice and identity as it relates to gender and academic writing, focusing on three core areas of work: work on identity and voice that has been carried out in undergraduate and adult education contexts; work on voice in postgraduate writing; and, third autoethnographic work carried out by academics reflecting on their writing for publication.

Foundational work on writing, voice and identity in undergraduate contexts is that of Ivanič who foregrounds the importance of identity in academic writing contexts (see for example Ivanič 2005 and 1995). A seminal publication from Ivanič is her 1998 work which was

focussed on the 'discoursal construction of identity' and drew attention to the importance of individuals' sense of self as lived experiences. Since Ivanič's initial study, a number of scholars have drawn on Ivanič and her colleagues' conceptions of writer-identity to make connections between identity and the ways they, or their students, write (or the ways in which their writing is restricted) in pedagogic contexts (see, for example, Phan Le Ha, 2009; Parkins in Carter et al., 2009 and Part II 'Pedagogy' in Carter et al., 2009) as well as in a range of adult and professional contexts (see for example Cremin et al. 2017; Cremin and Baker 2014, 2010).

Ivanič (2006) when drawing on the term 'identity', signals its use as an everyday word that people use for their 'sense of who they are' as well as *subjectivities* - that is identity being 'constructed through a process of making the self the subject' (2006, p. 7). Inherent is the idea that the self is a social entity which writers re-enact in writing with agency, but that there are also restrictions individuals experience connected to the social contexts in which they are writing. An important dimension to this tension between constraints and agency is captured in the use of 'identity work'. Whilst particular senses of identity may be strong, e.g. being a woman from a working-class background with a particular linguistic background, they are also always in process and for this reason the verb *identify* or doing *identity work* is used to signal that identities are not static but always in process and active (see also Reddy and Butler 2004; Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 1996; Butler, 1990). Moje and Luke (2009) capture this idea of identity work by describing the ways in which identity is '... socially situated, mediated, and produced as well as fluid and dynamic' (p. 432).

The models that Ivanič and her colleagues have constructed to engage with notions of identity have changed over time. In 1995 Ivanič developed a diagram which consisted of four strands: 'writers' life-histories', 'prototypical identities set up by discourse types', 'the impressions writers give of themselves' and 'writers expression of authorship, authoritativeness and authorial presence' (p.11). With these four strands she was engaging in debates about the role of the 'self' in writing both in terms of content, beliefs, values and attitudes, but also the choices that people make about the form and structure of their writing. Ivanič also made clear that she believes these dimensions of 'writer identity' are not only shaped by individual experiences but also power structures (1995, p. 10). Ivanič

argues that research into writing practices should involve consideration of the context of people's lives, including writers' 'feelings and intentions' (Ivanič 1998:335).

By 2010, Ivanič, along with Burgess, explored a slightly different approach to defining writer-identity by exploring identity in an adult literacy class (see Burgess and Ivanič 2010). Burgess and Ivanič did this by incorporating *time* into their model of writer identity. Their 2010 article drew on an ethnographic study and the data included students' written texts, field notes, photographs and interviews so that the authors might learn something about 'how ...discourses construct identities in adult literacy classes' (p. 231). Throughout this publication Ivanič and Burgess argued that different 'timescales' affect identity work in different ways (p. 243). This reflects, what Ivanič and Burgess argue, is the 'processual' nature of identity construction (see p. 233 in which Burgess and Ivanič draw on the work of Lemke 2000). Time is an issue that I explore in Chapter 7 of this thesis in *Writing tales: reinventing space*.

Lillis (2001) also engaged with the concept of voice to explore the ways undergraduate students make meaning in their academic writing (p. 51). Lillis proposed a heuristic which makes connections between Ivanič's 1995 framework for exploring the role of writer identity in student writing; Clark et al.'s (1990) exploration of 'rights and obligations' in student writing', and Fairclough's work on the role of context in writing (1992). When the work of Clark et al., Ivanič and Fairclough are juxtaposed many of the tensions that accompany student writing and, potentially, regulate the 'possibilities for self-hood' (Clark and Ivanič, 1997, p. 136) within academic writing practices are illuminated. Below, Lillis' heuristic (p. 51) is presented so that I can draw attention to the specific questions which many postgraduate students struggle with as they write academically.

Who can you be? (C) Who do you want to be?	Authority (I)
How can you say it? (C) How do you want to say it?	Authorial Presence (I)
What can you say? (C) What do you want to say?	Authorship (I)

Figure 1 Dimensions of identity in writing

(Source: Lillis, 2001, p. 51 who draws on Clark et al, 1990; Fairclough, 1992 and Ivanič, 1995)

Note. (C) refers to Clark et al. 1990 and (I) refers to Ivanič 1995.)

Lillis' heuristic above has been particularly useful in this study on postgraduate writing in that it sharply captures the processes that individuals engage with as they cultivate a voice, or presence, both as research students and writers. These struggles around voice are threaded through all of the writing tales in this thesis. However, the strongest links between participants' accounts of writing and the questions above can be seen through the following connections: *Writing tales: crafting texts* (Chapter 5) are connected to *How do you want to say it?* and *What do you want to say?*; and *Writing tales: struggles around writing* (Chapter 6) and the *Writing tales: reinventing space* (Chapter 7) connect most strongly with *Who do you want to be?*

Voice has also been used to grapple with the significance of identity in some work on postgraduate academic writing. Thesen and Cooper's edited collection (2013) which focuses on the significance of risk in postgraduate academic writing practices highlights the realities of what it can mean - in a lived sense - for many students who cross thresholds from having their authorial voice/s restricted to finding ways to have stronger, more prominent voices in academic texts. Their edited collection focussed on postgraduate writing grew from 'a collaboration in Cape Town South Africa' (p. 15) to a collaboration which included research into postgraduate writing and writers in the UK, Australia, the US and Canada. The article focusses on the experiences of writers who are seeking to express themselves in a post-Apartheid context, and contexts in which other social and cultural shifts have taken place that affect HE, notably widening participation. Cooper for example draws on the experiences of adult learners who are writing theses and explains: 'many adult learners enter this master's programme because they have a powerful desire to make their voices heard' (2013, p.46). Canagarajah and Lee (2013, p. 86) also usefully remind us 'there is more scope for voice for authors in the research article genre, especially those who have traditionally been excluded from mainstream publishing forums – such as women, minority and multilingual scholars'. Paxton too contributes to this important discourse on the significance of postgraduate student voice and agency (p. 200) by providing an example of feedback given to a mature student who is writing a research proposal in the Health Sciences. This student, in her writing, is discussing potential complications during childbirth which she supports with reference to the literature. However, she also includes statements about pregnancy being a 'joyful' but 'potentially

difficult period'. Her supervisor seeks to draw boundaries around this type of reflection in the literature review with the following, 'Please note your emotive style of writing is not appropriate for an academic piece. It is very readable and powerful but the tone is better suited to journalism (Paxton, 2013, p. 200)'. What is interesting about this tutor's comment is the supervisor's claim that the student's academic style [is] 'more suited to 'journalism'. This kind of argument is offered uncritically in the sense that suggestions regarding academic discourses in which 'powerful' and 'emotive' language might be appropriate were not put forward – nor were arguments related to the use of personal experience in academic writing more generally. This is an example where a student's attempts at crafting a particular kind of voice in an academic context has been constrained, or re-directed.

Voice for postgraduate writers can also consist of making difficult choices regarding the textual features of highly complex theoretical writing. Turner (2003) draws on a case study of a Korean student who is writing a PhD 'in English in the Contemporary Humanities' and 'drawing...on postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories' (p. 34) at the University of London. Turner explores the way that language is used in these disciplinary areas, but while doing so draws attention to the difficult decisions students are required to make with regard to these rhetorical features like deciding whether to use 'the use of opposites separated by a slash, as in "within/beyond"' (Turner, p. 43). Through this discussion, Turner points out the tensions that can occur when precision in expression in written text about theories is sometimes weighed against a student's desire to express sentences that have a personal meaning. For example, the student that Turner was discussing expressed desires to keep 'plays on words for herself in her work' (p. 43) where this may not have added to the fluency and comprehensibility of her writing for wider audiences.

Some autobiographical and reflexive work on the significance of gendered voices in academic writing has been carried out by a number of women academics. This work is significant in a discussion of voice because the women can be seen to be actively re-crafting conventional texts and enacting agency in terms of the voices they seek to inhabit as professional academics.

Davies (2006, p. 497) for example writes about her experiences as an academic 'existing within a male-female binary' in *Transgression in the halls of the academe* explaining that the article in which she is challenging this binary has been written not to

negate emotion and embodiment, but rather [open] the possibility of decomposing some aspects of our embodied history of inhabiting the male–female binary, as it is lodged in the structures and practices of the academy. (p. 497)

Davies' work draws on her own experiences, as well as interviews with other academics to create a 'collective biography' (p. 497) and explore notions of gender, and what it means to be in contemporary academia. Davies juxtaposes parts of her own written texts (e.g. a journal extracts and an opera she has composed) as the basis of her article. In doing so she makes points about the gendered nature of the academic world. The whole of Davies' text 'disrupt[s]' disciplinary conventions and represents the struggles many have encountered within academia, for example, having to deal with feelings of not deserving particular rewards, or managing a work context which perceives academics as 'economic units' (p. 497). Davies chooses opera because of the cultural significance of the Diva who is seen as both dangerous and beautiful. Below, I have included an extract from Davies' article where she draws on the symbol of the Diva to create and engage with the notion of transgression and women's roles as academics. Below is scene two:

Scene 2

Anna, a young woman who was at the lecture, enters. She dances alone in a dance of joy, the threads of music from the lecture replay as she sings and dances. She is alight with the erotic joy of new ideas. The sun shines through the window and her skin is dappled with the jewelled light through the glass. She is in love with the ideas in the lecture, with the lecturer's voice, with life. She is inspired in her dancing and in the intimate link between her body's movement and the music she imagines she will compose. (Davies, 2006, p. 503 and 504)

Davies' work challenges the idea that academic work should be without emotion or feeling, or that expressions of knowledge should be channelled through a homogenous set of criteria. Davies is not only writing to explore her own, and others', experiences of academia, but also to push the boundaries of academic writing itself, reminding us that much more is at stake with writing than a straight-forward delivery of knowledge.

Kehily's work (1995) similarly considers gender in relation to her own academic writing, focusing in particular on exploring the significance of narrative constructions. In her article,

she presents two versions of a personal story she has told (p. 24 -26) and then analyses the 'tensions in style and content' and narrative (p. 25). Kehily explains that 'Both stories adapt aspects of autobiographical writing, such as linear progression, realisation through time discovery and recovery of self. However, there are also gaps, exclusions, repositionings and repressions' (1995, p. 25). These stories and Kehily's initial analysis underpin an exploration, in the rest of her article, of the ways identities can be explored through 'self-narration', foregrounding the significance of voice, knowledge making and subjectivity. This work, which focuses on introducing what Kehily calls a more 'critical' way to tell stories, also points to the different ways gender and gender-related experiences can be represented in academic writing. For example, it allows the reader to engage with the idea that personal stories can be a legitimate strategy when exploring, and representing knowledge, in academic contexts. Her work also highlights the fact that choices related to the representation of knowledge matter, that they are significant not only in terms of how something is said, but also in terms of the different ways in which the self can be represented.

Voice is a useful notion in a study of academic writing practices because it has the potential to capture the issues and tensions that individual academic writers experience when they are crafting written texts. Across this thesis, voice is important across all three writing tales chapters: Chapter 5, *Writing tales: crafting texts*, demonstrates that individuals seek to craft written texts that are of significance to them; Chapter 6 shows how each writer is struggling to cultivate, sustain and inhabit a voice as a research student writing academic texts; in Chapter 7, women can be seen to be re-creating every-day places so that they have 'writing spaces' in which they can cultivate and sustain new ways of expressing new voices in their lives.

2.6 Conclusion

Chapter 2 of this thesis reviewed literature related to the three core dimensions of this research study: academic writing practices; the perspectives of students with regard to their academic writing practices; and the significance of gender in academic writing. The first part of the review (2.2) explored literature which reported on research which had engaged with postgraduate students' written texts. The review found postgraduate writing researchers have traditionally focussed on the more summative texts like the thesis, and

illustrates that there is a gap worthy of attention related to the wider range of writing in which students engage. The second part of the review (2.3) specifically explored literature reporting on writer perspectives; this part of the review underlined the fact that some research demonstrates that research students' writing practices and perspectives about their writing change over time, and that supervisor/advisor relationships and practices have important effects on the writing experiences of postgraduate research students. The third part of the review centred on research which has explored the significance of gender in academic writing (2.4). This part of the review informs the social and cultural conceptions of gender which thread through this thesis and points to the fact that the conditions under which women write as postgraduate research students are challenging and complex, signalling that gender and postgraduates' academic writing is a worthy and timely topic of investigation. Finally, 2.5 centred on research which has foregrounded voice, gender and academic writing. Discussions of this literature signalled that voice – as a concept which connects identity and written texts – is a useful notion to explore the gendered nature of writing. As a result of this section of the review, throughout this thesis, the concept of voice has been taken up as a means of both capturing gender as an active practice (see Chapter 5, 6 and 7) and as a means of facilitating discussion of the ways in which participants feel they are able to cultivate and sustain their own voices as research students producing academic texts.

Personal Reflection: Research writing, voice and meaning making

When discussing my research, for example in research groups and academic reading forums, I get emotional - I can't help it. The experiences of the writers, the parts of their every-day existence and the struggles and pleasures they have described with regard to academic writing are ones that I can relate to. This in itself is not problematic. However, the feelings of shame I sometimes experience because I have been emotional in an 'academic' context can sometimes get the better of me – and this can be challenging. For example, in a writing group recently, I became frustrated and sad when another writer was trying to explain to the group why she thought it was important to use the pronoun 'she' – as a generic pronoun (instead of 'he' or 'them') when she was writing about her own social science research. She was explaining that the country which was her home often overlooked the gendered dimensions of social practices and she wanted to foreground this. It meant something to her – and it sounded like it would be meaningful and important in her own research. In the discussion, it seemed like her voice was being flattened in some way. I felt like it was difficult for her to get her point across because some of the group felt like they needed to explain to her what they felt were 'normative' writing practices – in fact, I felt her voice *about* her writing could not be heard through their very strong opinions on this matter. I interjected after a certain point and explained that I thought it was very important that she felt free to follow her instincts on this issue, even if it meant others would challenge her work. In that moment, my own emotions – probably related to how my own feelings about gender in institutional contexts are so often overlooked took over. I realised that for a large part of my PhD I had had to deal with raised eye-brows and re-directions of conversations when the notion of gender is brought up. What is it about discussions of gender that elicits tired sighs? Is it that people believe the topic is obsolete – or is it that the ways in which we have gendered ourselves have become so deeply ingrained that it is just plain uncomfortable to talk about the issues?

Although feelings of embarrassment have become more and more infrequent, I can still experience shame when I have strong emotions in academic contexts. I have to admit, this has affected my own work practices. I sometimes feel myself needing to work at home for a time because dealing with people seems tough. In part – I believe this comes from a

belief that there is a sub-text (at least within Social and Applied Linguistics) that feelings are not always welcome. Emotional responses, for the most part, are not considered appropriate. But as another student explained about the importance of feelings in her own research the other day: 'I don't know another way'. I too have had to accept that my feelings and emotions are part of how I understand the world and make meaning in the world, and without them I am intellectually poorer. I often question whether being in 'research' is right for me – however, in the end, I know I am where I need to be. I research writing practices and gender - I enjoy the intellectual activity of engaging with theory and data. Emotions, then, are appropriate. I have chosen to respect my feelings and trust that they signal important dimensions of the social world in which we live (Archer, 2004).

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodology used to research postgraduate writing practices and perspectives and the potential significance of gender. Section 3.2 outlines the research questions that have framed this study. Section 3.3 focuses on epistemology and how this thesis draws on Academic Literacies as a critical tradition and make connections between this work and the philosophy of critical realism. Section 3.3 also explains what is meant when writing is described as *a social practice*, a key notion in this thesis. The participants are introduced in 3.4 and the manner in which they were recruited explained. This includes overviews of the educational backgrounds and the data collected from each participant. I give a broad overview of the methods used to collect data which were: texts, interviews, writing journals, field notes and images. Section 3.5 provides a more detailed explanation of each of these methods, and then in 3.6, I explain the approach taken to data analysis which includes a discussion of the significance of the emic perspective during data collection and analyses. Section 3.6 also includes clear explanations of the importance of writing tales as a mechanism for exploring and representing the themes. Section 3.6 then examines the range of possible choices available to researchers when transcribing spoken data and justifies the use of specific transcription conventions for this postgraduate research writing study. In 3.7 I explain the steps taken within this study, at both an institutional and personal level, to ensure the study's data was securely stored, as well as the privacy of all participants. Finally, 3.8 explores the notion of researcher reflexivity, drawing attention to two dimensions: first, the ways in which my experiences as a research student allowed me specific insights into the experiences of postgraduate research writers; and second, how I actively distanced myself from my own familiar positionings as a postgraduate student writer.

3.2 The research questions

Below are the three main research questions (RQs) of the study:

1. What are the academic writing practices of research students in the first two years of their research studies at a UK based university?
2. What are the perspectives of postgraduate research students about the writing they carry out while pursuing research qualifications?
3. In what ways is gender a significant dimension to postgraduate research students' academic writing practices?

The specific methods adopted to explore these questions are discussed in 3.5.

3.3 Epistemology

In a discussion of the epistemology underpinning this study, it is important to draw attention to two overarching theoretical frames: critical realism and Academic Literacies. The aim of this section is to underline key epistemological positions within each of these traditions and foreground connections between them.

As outlined in Chapter 1, connections between critical realism and Academic Literacies, can be understood in a number of ways. Firstly, the attention to an empirical exploration of the social world as a lived reality is significant in both traditions. This is evidenced in the Academic Literacies approach through the use of ethnographically oriented approaches to the collection and representation of data (see for example, Lillis and Scott, 2007), and in critical realism research through a commitment to empirical study of social phenomena. Secondly, both traditions have a critical orientation. This is explicitly foregrounded in critical realism (see 1.4) and strongly evident in Academic Literacies research, as illustrated in, for example, Thesen and Cooper's (2013) exploration of 'risk' as a significant dimension of writing for postgraduate writers in South Africa. They emphasise that writing as a postgraduate student can often mean 'writing from the margins' (p. 5) and finding ways to engage critically (or ask questions about) institutional and/or normative academic literacy practices.

This epistemological and methodological position is evident in a practical sense in the study on which this thesis is based, through the adoption of multiple methods, with interviews at the centre in order to explore perspectives rather than focusing, primarily, on the written text (see section 3.5). This critical stance was discussed in Lillis and Scott's (2007) well-known position paper which usefully framed the Academic Literacies tradition as developing at a specific 'historical moment in Higher Education' (p. 5), a 'moment' which gained momentum because of a range of social and historical factors including widening participation and an increase in the number of international students in the UK (p. 8). In this paper, Lillis and Scott also made links between these shifts in their local context, debates in the US where 'open access' initiatives had been increasing student numbers since the 1970s (p. 8) and post-apartheid policies transforming higher education in South Africa.

There are, therefore, epistemological connections between Academic Literacies and critical realism with both framing the study on which this thesis is based.

I will now turn to a discussion of the epistemological significance of the 'long conversation', a key methodological dimension to the study on which this thesis is based.

3.3.1 The long conversation (Lillis 2008 and Maybin 1996)

The notion of the 'long conversation' as an over-arching concept for exploring practices and perspectives is important because it highlights three significant aspects of the methodology in this thesis. First, it foregrounds the importance of the longitudinal nature of this research: the data collection in this study took place over a period of two academic years. Second, it draws attention to the notion that sense-making occurs amongst individuals over time. Maybin (1996) in a discussion of her analyses of 'spontaneous narratives from 10-12 year olds' spontaneous conversations' (p.36) explains that:

The way people make meaning together over time is recursive and iterative, as they revisit topics and experiences on different occasions, in a series of what might be called 'long conversations', which return again and again to particular themes and concerns'. (Maybin, 1996, p.37)

Here Maybin is using 'long conversation' to refer to meanings generated between children over a period of time. In this thesis 'long-conversation' is used to refer to the development

of meaning-making between the participants and me as the researcher. Maybin's argument that meaning-making in 'conversational narratives' can most usefully be seen, not as isolated communication events, but as talk which both draws on previous conversations, 'topics and experiences' and introduces new ones captures well how this kind of meaning making works on a practical level. In this study, as the participants and I talked about the experience of writing as research students, we moved back and forth between points in time, building shared understandings about what academic writing meant (and was coming to mean) to each postgraduate writer.

Third, drawing on Lillis (2008), it allows me (as the researcher) to focus on details of importance to the participants, to engage more closely with their ideas about writing, and develop more nuanced understandings of aspects of academic writing which are significant to them. Lillis (2008, p. 362) draws attention to the 'long conversation' as a tool which can potentially enable researchers to come to greater understandings of issues that are important to participants (rather than, in the first instance, looking for issues of importance to the researcher). She explains that conversations held over time with participants about their academic writing have the potential to allow for 'tiny emic details to be explored' (2008, p. 363) such as the discourses they choose to draw on to refer to others in their writing and how these might change over time (p. 364). Lillis provides examples from her own data which illustrate how these shifts can come about in research studies that take place over long periods, as illustrated below:

Example 5 (SW)

Moment 1: Writer uses word 'immigrant'; following discussion decides to replace with 'minorities.'

*Moment 2: 6 months later studying a second higher education course writer is unhappy with the use of phrase 'minorities' and prefers to use specific ethnicity marked groups names, such as, 'Yemeni,' 'Pakistani.' [*SW refers to student writer] (Lillis, 2008, p. 364)*

This methodological principle, which allows the researcher insights into issues of importance to writers and how individuals' writing can change, is evident in the

methodology adopted in the study on which this thesis is based. For example, Cosima's tale in Chapter 6 (6.7) re-counts a narrative which was significant to Cosima and related to tensions she had experienced regarding when and how academic writers should be (allowed to) 'draw conclusions' in their writing (July, 2011) (for a transcript of this interview with Cosima see Appendix 3). However, approximately eight months later, in March 2012 Cosima appeared to be less concerned about this particular aspect of academic writing and more concerned with how to make use of her data during analyses. This is illustrated by the way she recounts a small moment in her car where she is reflecting on her research through the writing of what she refers to as a 'philosophical statement'. In this statement she declared that she thought it was important for her to move toward an analysis of her data (also see her tale in 7.5) in which she states:

I realised I was doing exactly the same thing, going in circles, why I was doing the research, what the problems were and, so I have to re-do it from the start, and instead of explain why so much, I need to go forward and just go to analysis and see what happens. (An interview with Cosima, March 2012)

Through a long conversation with Cosima, I was able to see that her relationship to academic writing was changing. Over the eight months in which the two types of data were collected (in an interview about the writing of a literature review in July 2011 and then in March 2012, in an interview about the writing of a philosophical note), she appeared to move from a reflective space related to when and where she felt one was 'allowed to write... (in this specific case) conclusions' (July, 2011) to a space in which she was assuming greater control over her writing. This greater control was signalled by the desire, and decision, to stop 'going in circles' and to write an 'analysis' of her data (March, 2012). The long research conversation, then, can be seen as useful in that it signals the importance of meaning-making occurring over time, and highlights the fact that by engaging in long conversations (rather than one-off interviews) the researcher, can gain more nuanced understandings of practices and perspectives on academic writing.

3.3.2 Methods for researching writing as social practice

In Chapter 1 I underlined the social practices approach adopted for the study on which this thesis is based. The relevance of this approach to exploring student writing is summarised by Lillis:

Student academic writing, like all writing, is a social act. That is, student writing takes place within a particular institution, which has a particular history, culture, value and practices. It involves a shift away from thinking of language or writing skills as individual possession, towards the notion of an individual engaged in socially situated action. (Lillis, 2001, p. 31)

Lillis' emphasis on institutional contexts and the fact that literacy practices are always much larger than the individual, echoing Street (1984), foregrounds the many different facets of context (for example, personal, domestic, institutional) which students in HE learn to take into account when producing written texts. Within this approach therefore, writing is never viewed as just a written text, nor is it just an individual writing a text: writing takes place in specific material contexts (Barton and Hamilton, 1998) and holds specific meanings both individually and socially. The methodological implications of this approach are that multiple methods need to be used to capture texts, perspectives, places and participants. These are in evidence in the specific methods used in the study on which this thesis is based and which are described in detail below: texts, interviews, writing journals, field notes and a small number of photos. Before describing these methods in detail I offer an overview of the participants who took part in the study and the data collected overall.

3.4 The Participants

Sixteen women research-student participants were recruited in the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years in the UK to take part in the study. Table 1 summarises who was recruited, and is organised in alphabetical order according to the participants' pseudonyms. It documents the disciplines in which the participants were studying and their previous educational experience. This is then followed by a more detailed discussion of each of the participants. The participants were all selected because: 1) they were women, as I specifically wanted to explore women postgraduate's experience; 2) they were in the formative years of their research degrees and based in the UK at USE and my aim was to explore perspectives and experiences at this formative period (see Table 1 below for more detail). In the first email of invitation to participate in the study (see Appendix 1) which was sent to all female, first and second year research students at USE, I aimed to recruit women who had not had a straight-forward transition between A Levels and HE, or had, prior to postgraduate study in the UK, completed most of their schooling in countries other than

the UK. Initially I was hoping to understand more about the writing related experiences of ‘non-traditional’ postgraduate research writers. I am referring to the term as it was used in widening participation initiatives in the UK (see the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education’s Dearing Report, 1997) which states:

Despite the welcome increase in overall participation [in HE in the UK], there remain groups in the population who are under-represented in higher education, notably those from socio-economic groups III to V, people with disabilities and specific ethnic minority groups. Many of the causes lie outside higher education itself, although we recognise that higher education can contribute to improving the situation. We believe that the best progress will be made if the funding of expansion is targeted on institutions which can demonstrate a commitment to widening participation in the recent past, and have a robust strategy for doing so in the future. (The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education’s Dearing Report, 1997, Summary Point 29)

As I engaged in the recruitment process I came to see the definitions surrounding ‘non-traditional’ as contested and problematic. For example, different universities operationalise definitions differently in relation to admissions (see Hoare and Johnston, 2010). Other limitations of specific relevance to my study included the following: first, there was the potential to identify postgraduate writers with categories they did not, or no longer, saw as relevant to their identities as postgraduate research students and writers; second there was the potential to exclude postgraduate writers who, whilst following a conventional route through HE, had a range of life experiences and therefore had much to contribute to understandings about writing in research-related postgraduate contexts. As a result, recruitment was opened up to all female, first research students at USE who were either pursuing an EdD or a PhD (which may have included an MRes as a necessary first stage).

Sixteen women postgraduate students volunteered to take part in the study. Their educational backgrounds can be briefly summarised in the following way. Eleven of the participants had completed A levels in the UK and had transitioned directly into undergraduate education in the UK before pursuing a postgraduate research qualification at USE. The five other participants had educational backgrounds which differed from this trajectory. Two participants, one with German as first language (L1) and the other L1

Italian, had pursued a degree in a country other than the UK before taking up a postgraduate research qualification (see Table 1 for details). One participant had left secondary school at 16 in the UK and worked for an extended period of time, taking business related courses during that period, before returning to undergraduate studies at the age of 54; another had pursued study modules while working professionally in the healthcare system; the final participant had an A Level in Art and later then pursued further education as a mature student.

In a similar way to some of the findings referred to in Chapter 2, and emerging throughout this study was the significance of caring responsibilities to many of the women's lives. Table 1 below therefore includes mention of the caring responsibilities some postgraduate students had during their postgraduate research studies. Table 1 briefly summarises the participants, the research qualifications they were pursuing, their disciplinary backgrounds and their caring responsibilities.

Participant and interview location/s		Discipline (PhD Topic)	Pursuing a PhD	Pursuing an EdD	Caring Responsibilities
Aisha	UK	Business	√		√
		(Manufacturing and Textiles)			
Alison	UK	Education		√	√
		(Digital literacy)			
Anita	Germany	Education		√	√
		(Corpus Linguistics)			
Catherine	UK	Business	√		√
		(Psychology in Finance)			
Clara	UK	Business	√		
		(Communications in Business Meetings)			
Cosima	Italy, UK	Education		√	√
		(Digital History)			
Elise	UK	Physical Sciences	√		
		(Astronomy)			
Ellie	UK	Wellbeing and Social Care	√		√
		(SEND learners)			
Gaby	UK	Education		√	√
		(Numeracy in Health and Social Care)			
Jessica	UK	Education	√		√
		(Psychology and the Executive Function)			
Pippa	UK	Business	√		√
		(Entrepreneurship and Small Business')			
Renee	UK	Physical Sciences	√		
		(Astronomy and Geology)			
Samantha	UK	Education	√		√
		(Linguistics)			
Sophia	UK	Mathematics and Statistics	√		
		(Statistics)			
Valerie	UK	Education	√		√
		(Public Science)			
Yasmin	UK	Business	√		
		(Collaboration/s in financial sector)			

Table 1 The participants' disciplines, educational backgrounds and caring responsibilities

3.4.1 Overview of the data collected

Table 2 provides an overview of the data collected and demonstrates that a range of data was collected in order to generate understandings in relation to each of the research questions. However, the larger ticks foreground the data and methods which were more effective in generating insights for corresponding research questions. For example, the first research question: *What are the academic writing practices of research students in the first two years of their research studies at a UK based university?* was most effectively addressed with data from interviews, the collection of the participants' written texts and the writing journals (indicated by the large ticks in the first horizontal line of the Table).

Research questions	Interviews	Written texts	Writing journals	Photos	Field notes
RQ1. What are the academic writing practices of research students in the first two years of their research studies at a UK based university?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RQ2. What are the perspectives of postgraduate students about the writing they carry out while pursuing research qualifications?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RQ3. In what ways is gender a significant dimension to the postgraduate research students' academic writing practices?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2 Mapping the three main research questions against the data collected

Below is an overview of texts, interviews and writing journals over two academic years.

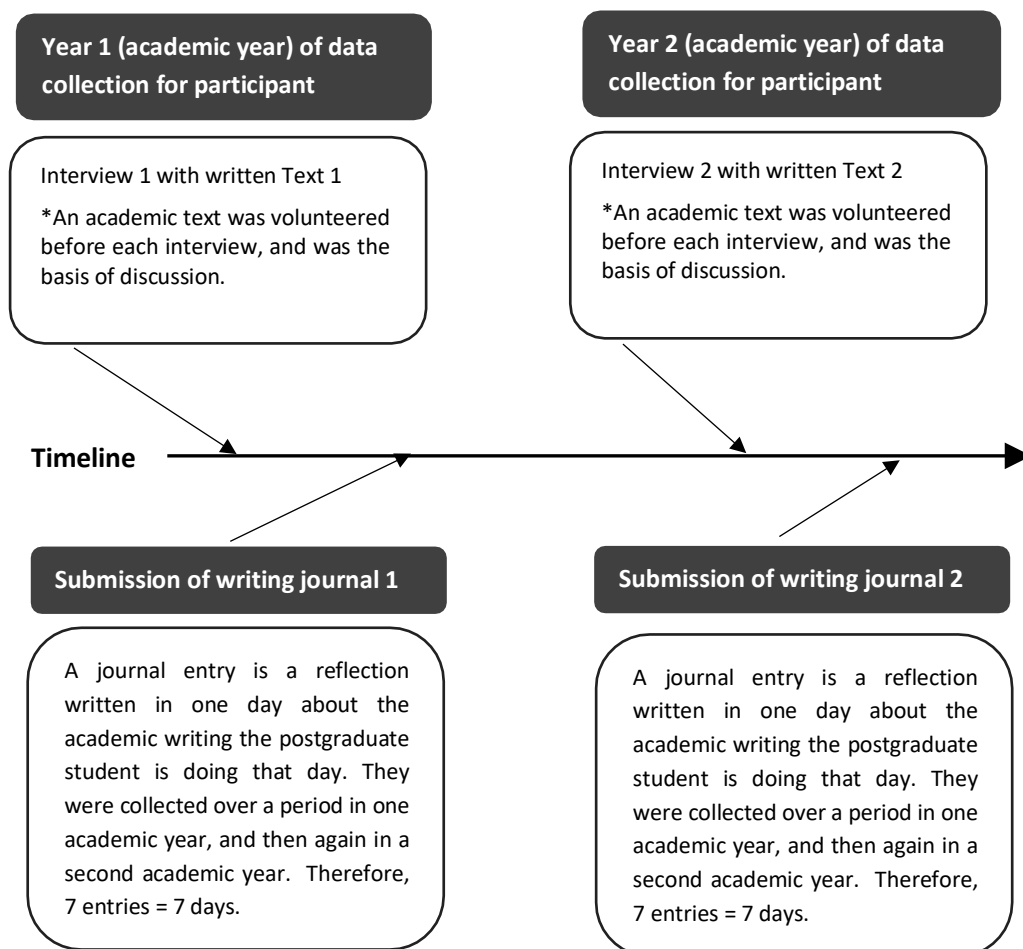


Figure 2 An overview of texts, interviews and writing journals

Each postgraduate writer participated in at least two interviews. In these interviews, they were asked to bring a written text that they saw as valuable to the ongoing development of their research. After these interviews, each participant was invited to write in a journal about their thoughts and perspectives during periods when they were engaged in academic writing. Unlike the interviews, I did not explicitly request a written text to accompany the writing journals. The priority was to create a space in which participants had the opportunity to express their perspectives about their writing that they may not have felt comfortable expressing in an interview context (see 3.5.3 for more details about the writing journals). Some participants, though, did choose to submit a written text with their writing journals. It is important to note that not all participants completed writing journals (see Table 3 for specific details).

It is also important to note that, I wrote field notes after interviews where I felt it would be useful to record additional information about the place in which the interview was carried out, and significant impressions and feelings related to the interviews. Notes were also made about the situation and context of the interview and the talk which occurred when the audio device was not recording (see 3.5.4 for more detail).

Table 3 presents an overview of the participants and data collected.

Participant and interview location/s	Discipline (PhD Topic)	Interviews	Written text(s) collected at first interview	Written text(s) collected at second interview	Journal entries	Field-notes	Images
Aisha UK	Business (Manufacturing and Textiles)	X2	PhD research proposal	Probation report	-	-	Yes
Alison UK	Education (Digital literacy)	X2	Coursework assignment	A document written in preparation for supervision– an exploration of the case-study	7 entries	-	-
Anita Germany	Education (Corpus Linguistics)	X2	Coursework assignment	A document written in preparation for supervision discussing RQs	-	-	-
Catherine UK	Business (Psychology in Finance)	X2	Probation report	A document written in preparation for supervision (discussing research questions RQs)	4 entries	Yes	-
Clara UK	Business and Management Studies (Communications in Business Meetings)	X2	A document written in preparation for supervision discussing topic	An abstract for a conference	9 entries	Yes	Yes
Cosima Italy, UK	Education (Digital History)	X2	A coursework assignment: a 'reflective' essay	One philosophical statement written during data collection	7 entries	Yes	Yes

Participant and interview location/s	Discipline (PhD Topic)	Interviews	Written text(s) collected at first interview	Written text(s) collected at second interview	Journal entries	Field-notes	Images
Elise UK	Physical Sciences (Astronomy)	X2	PhD probation report	PhD probation report	-	Yes	Yes
Ellie UK	Wellbeing and Social Care (SEND learners)	X2	A document written in preparation for supervision discussing topic	A thesis chapter (methods)	4 entries	Yes	-
Gaby UK	Education (Numeracy in Health and Social Care Education)	X2	A coursework assignment	A document written in preparation for supervision reflecting on the topic	-	Yes	-
Jessica UK	Education (Psychology and the Executive Function)	X2	A research poster	An information document written to support policy level work	8 entries	Yes	-
Pippa UK	Business (Entrepreneurship and Small Business')	X2	A coursework assignment	A research proposal for a PhD application	9 entries	Yes	-
Renee UK	Physical Sciences (Astronomy and Geology)	X2	PhD probation report	A chapter of a thesis (Chapter 1), records of lab work, daily observations of ongoing experiments	-	-	Yes

Participant and interview location/s	Discipline (PhD Topic)	Interviews	Written text(s) collected at first interview	Written text(s) collected at second interview	Journal entries	Field-notes	Images
Samantha UK	Education (Linguistics)	X2	A document written in preparation for supervisions: a discussion of transcription and video as method	A document written in preparation for supervision explaining the research questions and proposed methodology.	25 entries	Yes	-
Sophia UK	Maths and Statistics (Statistics)	X2	PhD probation report	PhD thesis chapter	-	Yes	-
Valerie UK	Education (Public Science)	X2	A draft article submitted for publication	A published journal article	5 entries	Yes	-
Yasmin UK	Business (Collaborations in Financial sector)	X2	Extended writing for supervisors	Supervision minutes	4 entries	Yes	-

Table 3 An overview of the participants and the data collected

3.5 Methods of data collection

In section 3.5 I explain the three data collection methods I see as central to developing to a 'long conversation' about writing practices with participants (Lillis, 2008; Maybin, 1996): the first method is 'texts', the second is the 'interview', and the third, 'writing journals'. In 3.5.1 I discuss the method used to collect written texts. In 3.5.2 I provide details about the specific schedule of questions developed for the two interviews which were held over two academic years for each participant, and in 3.5.3 I discuss how 10 participants produced writing journals all of which were used during analyses. Each of the 10 participants reflected on their experiences of writing an academic text in journal entries. Here I also explain the prompts that were used in these journals, and provide details about the ways in which the journals were used by the participants. This is followed by a discussion of other data collected the texts, field notes and photos which were collected.

3.5.1 Texts

The collection of written texts was a key part of the study and a significant element of each interview. Prior to each interview (see 3.5.2), I asked each participant to select a written text they had been writing which they perceived as significant to the ongoing development of their own research. Initially, this request was communicated via email (see Appendix 1). However, this was often followed by a telephone call in which both the postgraduate writer and myself discussed the many kinds of texts that could potentially be submitted as a part of this process. It was made clear to all participants that I was interested in researching a range of different types of texts, not necessarily just the more commonly assessed types like the thesis. The interviews in which two different written texts were discussed were held once each in a separate academic year (see Table 3 for a list of the texts discussed in each interview). During interviews other texts sometimes became a part of the discussion. A full list of the written texts collected, as well as those discussed in interview and writing journals is discussed in Chapter 4.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews were central to developing a 'long conversation' about writing practices with participants (see section 3.3.1). The type of interview developed was based on the methodology of literacy histories (see, for example Barton et al. 2007), Ivanič's work on the

autobiographical self, (1998) and talk around text methodologies (e.g. Lillis, 2008). By drawing on these bodies of work, my intention was to ground discussions of writing in the reality of the participants' practices and everyday lives. Written texts in the interviews were used primarily as prompts for exploring participants' perspectives on writing, as well as a source of information about the range and type of writing in which they engaged for postgraduate study.

Before each interview, each participant was asked to select, and send the researcher (myself) an academic text they had been working on which they felt was significant to the ongoing development of their own research. This request was communicated through a range of different kinds of conversations, and the recruitment material (see for example Appendix 1). The participants were encouraged to be inclusive about the kinds of texts that could be discussed in the interviews so that all types of writing at postgraduate level could be explored and their significance to participants discussed.

The first interview with each participant focussed on a written text alongside the postgraduate research writer's trajectory into research because often it was the first time the participant and I had met. A different written text was discussed at each of the two interviews. These were texts that the participant was encouraged to choose because they saw the text as significant in terms of the ongoing development of their research. Both interviews, in each academic year, used the same interview schedule (which is explained in detail below), but the first interview, as mentioned, also included a focus on autobiographical details.

Each interview was sharply connected to the Research Questions (see section 3.2) which included, the contexts of a text's production and the perspectives of the participants about their academic writing. In order to build a meaningful framework for discussion around writing, and participants' understandings about what constitutes academic writing, the interview schedule was organised around seven key frames of reference found to be evident in the conceptualisation of writing in existing literature. These were: writing as craft; writing as research tradition; writing as reflecting particular epistemologies; writing as aesthetics or creativity; the position of the self and other in the written text; writing as access and participation; the significance of gender to experiences of writing. These frames for different conceptualisations of writing were drawn from a review of existing literature

(see Chapter 2) and developed to connect with the diverse professional, academic and disciplinary backgrounds of postgraduates participating in the study. Underpinning this rationale is the idea that individuals write, and talk about writing, in different ways, depending on their disciplinary backgrounds and lived experiences, and that some postgraduate students may find one frame of reference for talking about writing more aligned with their specific background than another. The existence of a range of frames of reference has been underlined in much research including for example, Creme and Lea (2008, Chapters 1 and 12), who illustrate the different ways in which students articulate the nature of academic writing and Mitchell and Riddle (in Goodwyn and Stables, 2004, p. 67 & 68) who highlight the different conceptions that students in higher education can have of key aspects of academic writing, such as 'argument'. Throughout the interviews, the same schedule of questions was used with each participant, but the seven frames were made visible in order to enable each participant to talk about writing in a way that seemed meaningful to them (see Appendix 2 for interview schedule).

A specific example of how these frames were used to generate questions for the interviews can be seen below. Here I am using the frame of reference *writing as research tradition* as the underpinning concept for the following interview questions:

Do you consider yourself to belong to a research tradition of some kind? Could you explain a little?

If relevant, can you give a couple examples of specific writing traditions or 'rules' in your 'academic' area? Are there rhetorical features and textual strategies mark your work as scientific or academic? Could you give a couple of examples? What do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of these 'traditions' or 'rules'?

Are there specific academic debates or arguments that inform your discipline? If so, can you give an example of how you show these in your writing? Does this present any challenges or problems for you? If so, why?

Given the central concern of gender to the study on which this thesis is based it is important to explain in more detail my intentions with the gender-focussed question (see Appendix 2). With this question I was aiming to construct a space within the interview where gender was explicitly a focus for discussion. The choice to make gender an explicit point of discussion was significant in that it connects to the critical orientation of the research (see section 1.4), that is an ideological position that gender permeates the social

structures which constitute our day-to-day existence. Following a strong tradition in feminist research therefore (see for example, Stanley and Wise, 1993, 1983; Cook and Fonow, 1986) I took the decision to put gender explicitly on the agenda in discussions to make it a visible and legitimate area for discussion.

3.5.3 Writing journals

Twice, each in a separate academic year, the participants were asked to complete journals about academic writing they were engaged in. They were asked to complete a journal for no less than a week, or if they chose, they could continue their reflections for as long as a month. The writing journals were designed to realise two functions. First, the journals provided a space in which the participants could reflect on their own academic writing practices. Second, they functioned as an additional means of communication between the participants and the researcher (for a discussion of the importance of the 'long conversation' to meaning making in this thesis, see 3.3). It is not uncommon for journals to be used in this way in research: Janesick's review of the historical uses of journals, for example, explains that long term qualitative studies often 'use a journal as an interactive tool of communication between the researcher and participants in the study' (1999, p. 506). The journals also proved advantageous in that they gave the participants additional time in which to reflect on their academic writing practices, a space some participants found more useful than others. See for example, the extracts from Clara's journal (7.7) in which she is enthusiastically exploring the potential of her research in her writing journal.

Questions guiding the journal writing were attached to a set of instructions explaining how to use the journal template (for examples, see Figures 3 and 4). Although the participants were given the choice to make audio recordings as a form of journal, all of the students who submitted journal entries submitted electronic, typed versions, with the exception of one participant, Pippa, who had hand-written one of her journals (she wrote her journal, by hand, on one day). Wherever possible, the participants were asked to report on the experience of developing a specific written text, and this was evident throughout the journals. Figure 3 is an extract from a standard letter which was sent to all participants about the journals, which they were asked to complete once an academic year, for two academic years.

Dear Participant

Thank you very much for your contributions to this research study so far. This section of my data collection is a short diary/journal type activity. See page 2 & 3 of this document for some questions to guide your thoughts as you 'journal' about a text you are currently writing. **This could take as little as a few minutes a night, four nights a week, for one week** - or you could continue to write these for a month. Below, I have described this process in a little more detail:

Could you please *free-write* (or *record*) your thoughts **about any research-related piece of writing you are currently working on**. Examples of writing could be: a research proposal, a probation report draft, a chapter of thesis, an application to present at a conference, an interview schedule or survey, some analysis of data, an application for funding, a methods assignment, a research journal entry, or even an email for your supervisor. I do understand that each of you will be working on very different things, so the research-related writing you choose to reflect on is entirely up to you. If you would prefer to record yourself talking about your thoughts, please feel free to record yourself and send the audio file/s to me. I'd be happy to supply you with a memory card for your audio files (these can be troublesome to email) - just let me know.

Below is a table to guide your diary entries - you can spend as long as you like on each entry (or as little time as you like, because I know how demanding your schedules are). The only thing I ask is that you try to complete a minimum of four entries, but feel free to do as many as you like and return the sheet to me by August the 6th, 2012. If you prefer to handwrite your responses, please send me a copy at:

Figure 3 Writing journal instructions sent to all participants in the academic writing and gender study

At the completion of the study 10 out of 16 participants submitted writing journals. Those 10 participants produced 82 entries (that is, they filled in their journals on 82 days over two years). Table 3, in 3.4, lists which participants submitted journals for the postgraduate writing study and the number of entries each provided for the study.

Research around journal writing suggests exploratory learning journals can be productive spaces to explore learning (or in this case the writing that takes place as a part of learning). For example, Creme (2008) proposed learning journals be used in HE to promote a less restricted, potentially more creative space in which the more formal dimensions of learning can be explored (e.g. p. 49). McGuinness (2009) also explored the use of journals in an undergraduate feminist Geography module at a UK university. His work is significant because it actively endeavoured to create a more flexible, less restrictive space in which the personal and the academic could be explored. He claims that journals 'proved immensely valuable in engaging students personally and meaningfully in ways that made sense to individuals themselves' (p. 347). While I was not assessing or teaching the

participants in this study, McGuinness' and Creme's observations are useful because the use of writing journals did create, for some, spaces in which the participants' personal and academic lives could meaningfully come together and there were moments when the act of writing became quite vividly alive in the journal 'space'. One final value of including writer journals as part of the methods used to explore the postgraduates' writing experiences was that the journals had the potential to illuminate writing as a social practice. That is, because they were written closer to the times and spaces in which academic writing was carried out the journals had the potential to more accurately illuminate the practical, day-to-day realities of writing academically. This can be seen in the Figure 4 in which a participant is describing the immediate context in which she is writing. The academic and the personal meaningfully come together and there were definitely moments when the act of writing became vividly alive in the journal 'space'.

Your Name: Entry Number: 3

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. What is the date and time? Please briefly describe where you are.</p> <p>2. Describe the piece of writing you are working on (e.g. research proposal, chapter of thesis, application for funding, assignment, or an email for your supervisor etc.)
<i>If possible, please discuss the same piece of work in each entry.</i></p> <p>3. Describe any challenges or issues you are having that are related to this piece of writing. How might you tackle or address these issues? Alternatively, are you finding the writing pleasurable in any particular ways?</p> <p>4. If relevant, please describe any interaction/s you have had with anyone over this piece of writing and anything that arises from reflecting on these interactions (these interactions could be informal or formal conversations -or feedback -from a peer, supervisor, friend, family member or colleague).</p> <p>5. Please describe your perspective e.g. how you are feeling about your own writing/planning/thinking? Do you have thoughts on why this might be the case?</p> <p>6. Do you have any thoughts on how gender may (or may not) have had significance for you in the writing practices you have discussed above.</p> | <p>19/01/2013 at 16.40 as above</p> <p>The same piece as above, just finishing [a methods chapter discussing informed consent].</p> <p>Very tired this morning so it was hard to concentrate and having been cooped up for over a week I needed to get out so went for a long walk. Today I came to the writing quite late in the day because I knew it was near completion last night. Today I feel I really need to do more and make some kind of discussion/decision about how I'm going to analyse the data as I've previously always worked using grounded theory (although I never realised it at the time!). I do now feel it is 'done' enough to get feedback and work on it more.</p> <p>I've not talked about it with anyone today, not even John.</p> <p>I'm feeling less anxious about it now, partly because I think the writing I have done, despite still being in a rough format, is fairly good. I'm worried that my word count isn't high enough - for some reason I didn't clarify how long it should be. One thing which emerged in conversation last night is that I am becoming... not so much hyper-critical but very challenging in conversation. Or 'argumentative' as John says. Over the last couple of weeks there have been times when I've kind of belittled him intellectually and I think it's because I'm so accustomed to questioning everything I'm reading and trying to pick holes in it (even if it's a statement I support) to critique everything from all angles that that way of thinking has somehow transferred into my daily conversation. We talked about it (I brought it up, not John) and that will hopefully allow me to moderate how I interact.</p> <p>I suppose women are supposed to be more touchy feely and men are supposed to be more analytical. It adds to nagging doubts I have about my ability to properly empathise with people, which for a qualitative researcher working with disabled people is not good!</p> |
|---|---|

Figure 4 A writing journal entry written by Ellie, January 2013

The six journal prompts, which are on the left column of Ellie's journal entry above, were specifically designed to address the research questions in the following ways. First, I was interested in learning more about the participants' writing practices as they were enacted in their home environments, for example: what were the physical spaces in which the participants' were writing? were the postgraduate research writers working in their living rooms while their families were out for the day? did the writers move around different areas in their houses? did they have their own study or space in the house dedicated to their writing? An additional prompt within the journal framework asked the participants to write about the kinds of conversations (people and relationships) that played a role in the development of the text they were working on. I was also aiming to explore the perspectives of the postgraduate writers about their academic writing while they were thinking about, planning for and engaging in academic writing. Consequently, I asked the participants to describe any challenges or issues they were having related to the piece of writing they were developing. I also asked the participants to reflect on how they were managing these challenges. Next, the participants were asked to reflect on whether they were finding the writing pleasurable in any particular ways. Finally, the participants were asked about their thoughts on gender, and whether they thought gender may, or may not have had an impact on their writing. Their responses were often revealing, in the sense that some indication was often given as to the ways that the participants understood the notion of gender, and the manner it was meaningful to them.

Ellie's journal entry in Figure 4 is also an example of where a participant is able to provide information about her perspectives of her own writing of an academic text through writing in the journal, for example: 'I'm feeling less anxious about it now, partly because I think the writing I have done, despite still being in a rough format, is fairly good'. This journal entry also provides information about the relationships and people that are surrounding the act of writing:

One thing which emerged in conversation last night is that I am becoming... not so much hyper-critical but very challenging in conversation. Or 'argumentative' as John says. Over the last couple of weeks there have been times when I've kind of belittled him intellectually (An extract from Ellie's writing journal, January 2013)

In this particular journal entry, the participant reflects on possible relationships between her research related reading and writing and family (an aspect of the social context in which she is writing): 'I think it's because I'm so accustomed to questioning everything I'm reading and trying to pick holes in it (even if it's a statement I support) to critique everything from all angles that that way of thinking has somehow transferred into my daily conversation. We talked about it (I brought it up, not John) and that will hopefully allow me to moderate how I interact'. In terms of adopting a critical realist perspective, the journal extract generates questions about gender: Why, for example, does Ellie feel it is important to moderate her 'interaction' with John or become less 'argumentative' in an intellectual sense? These are important questions related to gendering, in this case, generated through reflections recorded in a participant's writing journal. I will now turn to the significance of the field notes as a tool for the collection of data.

3.5.4 Field notes

Field notes are the notes written by a researcher in order to record important details about data collection events, sites and researcher impressions (see Blommaert and Jie, 2010, for example, which discusses the importance of fieldnotes in ethnographic research). In the case of this study, I did not always write field notes, but in the event that I did, they were written immediately after the interview wherever it was logistically possible. During the process of carrying out the research, it became clear that field notes would add value, depth and detail to the interview transcripts. In total field notes were written for 12 of the 16 participants (see Table 3).

In all cases, the field notes had three key functions. First, field notes included important logistical information such as the times and places in which the interviews were carried out. Second, they acted as records of my immediate impressions of the highlights of the interviews, as well as records of words or phrases that were spoken before or after the audio device was recording, talk I felt I might need to recall during analyses. Third, the field notes developed into a form of researcher self-regulation. By this I mean that my feelings and/or concerns about interviews including the manner in which the interview had been carried out were reflected upon. I then considered how these issues might be addressed as the research progressed. The extracts below illustrate this third particular use of field notes and includes ideas which were recorded which I thought might improve future interviews:

EXTRACT 1 from field notes: *tried to keep a better balance in this interview. I tried to make fewer value judgements about aspects of her writing and stick to what was actually written on the paper.*

EXTRACT 2 from field notes: *I made a conscious decision to not be afraid of some self-disclosure. I had thought a fair bit about that and thought it was unfair and perhaps unethical to expect people to disclose their feelings and beliefs...without allowing some parts of me to be present in the interaction. I felt that our relationship just wouldn't be productive without some sort of honest interaction. In this sense, I think I [we] had a better interview.*

The first extract above reflects a desire to develop, what might be perceived, as a more neutral stance on written texts, while the second extract reflects a growing awareness, and sensitivity to, the potential vulnerability of the participants in interviews. The second extract also explains how I came to believe that through some self-disclosure, I would be recognising the potential vulnerability of the participants and interacting more honestly with them. In this sense, the field notes can be seen to be a tool that provided spaces in which I could reflect on the interviews, and clarify where adjustments needed to be made to interviewing technique/s. The field notes helped me to make changes which improved the interviews as the study progressed. Figure 5, is an example of field notes written after the first interview was carried out with Clara:

We met at 10am. C was waiting for me in the small coffee-shop area in the foyer of her university's library. She was waiting at a table at the front in the sunshine but we decided to move to a table behind a screen in the coffee shop – this was at the back and gave us a little more privacy. I organised a coffee for her – a flat-white from the coffee machine in the small area where we were sitting and we began. She was quite interested in my studies and where I was coming from with my research so I spent a little time at the beginning explaining my research and its background. We also did this at the end of the session – I left the tape recorder on during this time in case any issues came up.

C seemed quietly confident about her work and her interests – I think this may have been because she'd spent a long time in professional work which was specifically related to what she was researching. Perhaps it was also the fact that she had been a manager and, I suspect, had dealt with a fair bit of responsibility in these professional contexts.

C was also interested in the notion of *voice* and this came up quite naturally. We talked about some reading I had been doing on the notions of *voice* and *identity*. Throughout the interview I also became quite interested in what she had to say about confidence and how she had acquired/was acquiring a certain kind of confidence in her writing and studies – from memory she related this to age.

She was also interested in whether her 'single' status (her partner lived away in a different town) affected whether she was suitable for the study – she wasn't sure whether I was mainly interested in women with children with families. We had an interesting conversation about this – I said that at this stage I looked at gender as a dimension that might engage with these kinds of categories, but that it was much more than that – I was also interested in how gender, for example, might affect our *voices* etc.

Figure 5 Field notes written after an interview with Clara – a participant in the postgraduate research writing study

Consequently, the field notes not only proved to be a useful form of data, or a source of important information that captured information which may not have been recorded in interview, but also as a tool which enabled me to reflect on my own practice as a researcher.

3.5.5 Photos

Lillis (2008) highlights the importance of multiple sources of data to academic writing research that is ethnographic, explaining how these sources of data provide the basis for 'thick description' in research (2008, p. 372) and provide important information about the contexts of writing, and hence the writing practices themselves. Much can be learned about academic writing (and literacy in general) from visual records of the places in which writing takes place (see Hamilton 2000). Below, Lillis discusses how her own 'core text history data' was enhanced with multiple data sources' including images:

While the data most obviously relevant to text histories were (and are) a focus for the researchers, other multiple data sources—what might be considered as “background”—provide rich contextual detail for both making sense of the “core” text history data and for understanding the meanings and practices of academic writing in the distinct geohistorical contexts. (Lillis, 2008, p. 369)

The very small number of photos I took and collected for the study - five pictures relating to participants and several that I took of my own writing spaces- proved to be a valuable source of information which allowed me to connect with the data in different ways. For example, I took a picture of one of the desks at which Aisha wrote while she was a research student (see 7.4). This image, along with the field notes and interviews, were important sources of knowledge about the writing she carried out while pregnant and also prompted reflections on the importance of using different spaces throughout the house, leading to a theoretical exploration of space and academic writing (see Chapter 7).

3.6 Methods of data analysis and representation

In this section, I outline the methods used to analyse and represent findings and insights from the data. I begin by discussing the significance of the emic/etic continuum (3.6.1). This is followed by a description of the collection, collation and analyses of written texts (3.6.2). Section 3.6.3 then explains the ways in which the interviews, writing journals and field notes were analysed (3.6.2). In 3.6.4 I introduce the writing tales and explain their significance in terms of representing the data collected in this study. I conclude 3.6 by discussing the ways in which transcription of the interviews was carried out.

3.6.1 The emic/etic continuum

Whether a researcher foregrounds an emic or etic perspective in a study usually signals the degree to which a researcher seeks to represent the perspectives of participants.

Participant perspectives can be foregrounded through choices related to data collection, or in the ways that the data is represented in texts. For example, contemporary ethnographic work is well known as valuing insider (or emic) perspectives and seeking to closely represent the natural and authentic language and behaviours of individuals, or the specific aspects of the culture or society which are being studied (for more detailed discussion, see Olive 2014).

Some widely used definitions of emic and etic define the notions as discrete orientations toward research where there is very little overlap. See for example the definition below from the Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia (2017):

Taking an insider position has historically meant that emic studies involve sustained, wide-ranging observation of a single cultural group. In classical fieldwork, for example, an ethnographer immerses him-or herself in a setting, developing relationships with informants and taking on social roles (e.g., Geertz [1983](#); Whyte [1955](#)). The emic is concerned with collating insider accounts which explore actions primarily in terms of the actors' self-understanding; emphasizing their culturally and historically bound nature. Concepts and constructs are devised from insider accounts gathered in interviews and by capturing naturally occurring talk (Silverman [1993](#)). Accounts are furnished with extensive observations of the site. This immersive work is geared to creating a "thick description" (Geertz [1973](#)) of behaviors, patterns, and interactions. Thick description provides a detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit contextualized patterns of cultural and social relationships.

In contrast, the etic approach often starts with theory, hypotheses, and concepts that may hold less local resonance for participants inside the setting being studied. As Lett ([1990](#): 130) describes it, "Etic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as

meaningful and appropriate by the community of scientific observers. (Whitaker, 2017, <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/10.1002/9781118430873.est0640>, Accessed 1 July 2018)

However, the emic and etic orientations are now frequently acknowledged by researchers, not as two discrete, but as two positions on a continuum, sometimes overlapping. Consider, for example Olive (2014) and his account of the potentially productive tensions between emic and etic perspectives:

Within qualitative research, there are a number of methodologies which significantly favor the emic over the etic and visa versa. Regardless of the methodology being employed, many researchers of social behavior reside within the tension between the two extremes. Given the inescapable subjectivity that every researcher brings to a study through his or her past experiences, ideas and perspectives, a solely emic perspective is impossible to achieve. Conversely, if a researcher takes a purely etic perspective or approach to a study, he or she risks the possibility of overlooking the hidden nuances, meanings and concepts within a culture that can only be gleaned through interviews and observations. (Olive, 2014)

As a researcher I was working across the emic/etic orientations in four ways. First, I was a postgraduate student for whom academic writing was central to my day-to-day lived experience of pursuing a research degree. In this sense, I drew on my experiences of academic writing to make sense of the experiences of other research students. Here I can be seen to be an 'insider' who was adopting a more emic orientation to the research. Second, as a researcher in literacy studies drawing on sociolinguistics and literacy studies, and taking up the notion of 'the long conversation' (Lillis 2008 and Maybin 1996: see 3.3 for a more detailed discussion) I was able to get close to the perspectives of participants about their writing. Through this more emic orientation, understandings were built, and knowledge shared, between the participants and I about the specific aspects of academic writing which were of significance to each participant (see, for example Lillis, 2008, p. 359 & 360). The 'long conversation' notion also draws attention to the fact that these understandings were unpacked over time. Third, adopting a reflexive stance (see section 3.8) led to greater understandings of the ways in which my researcher perspectives

might influence the research. Through my personal reflections on writing, and the field notes carried out during research I was able to move towards an etic orientation, to stand back and engage with the data with greater distance when it was required during analyses. Finally, it was also necessary to adopt a more explicitly etic lens, in the sense that I was a researcher adopting a critical perspective. Drawing on critical realism and Academic Literacies, I worked at cultivating this orientation: it was important to actively distance myself as the researcher from the participants' experiences as well as read the data in critical ways for example by foregrounding the significance of gender (see the Conclusion in this thesis for more detailed commentary).

I will now turn to a more detailed discussion of the ways in which data was analysed and represented in this study of postgraduate writing practices.

3.6.2 Analysing the written texts

Analysis of the written texts collected and documented (in interviews and journals) was carried out in the following ways.

First, a detailed inventory was carried out of all texts collected and documented in order to offer an overview of the amount and range of writing that is carried out in the first years of postgraduate research study. Second, texts were categorised in terms of their primary rhetorical function, individual variation and disciplinary variation. Third, texts were categorised along a cline of visible to occluded, drawing on Swales (1990). Findings from these analyses are presented in Chapter 4.

Texts were also analysed in relation to participants' accounts and experiences. Of particular importance in the study was to explore the significance of the range of writing to postgraduate students, rather than focusing primarily on the thesis and related writings (such as draft chapters). Where specific textual features were signalled as important, these were analysed in the context of participants' overall experiences and practices. These context-specific textual analyses are included in the writing tales in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

3.6.3 Analysing the interviews, writing journals and field notes

As each interview was carried out, the audio of these interviews was transcribed (see 3.6.5) and then loaded into Atlas Ti, a qualitative analysis software programme often used for

working with qualitative data. The writing journals, field notes and images were also uploaded into Atlas Ti. The data was organised and labelled in such a way that a full set of data was visible for each participant.

Atlas Ti was chosen as an instrument to support analysis for three reasons. First, it facilitated the grouping of the data into a range of configurations, so that one could look at, for example, the participants' interviews and their writing journals alongside each other. The full range of data was thus juxtaposed against each other in different ways. Second, it was a useful tool for engaging with writing focussed ethnographic research, as Atlas Ti accommodates written texts as images or as (editable and not editable) depending on the needs of the researcher and the form in which each text has been submitted for the study. Third, I was able to create a series of codes and write notes against these codes, across the multiple types of data. There was also a range of options available for looking at these codes in different groupings.

Once the entire data-set had been collected and uploaded onto Atlas Ti, I proceeded to read and analyse the data taking note of aspects which I saw connecting to the research questions. Barton and Hamilton (1998, p. 2003), in their study of literacy practices, highlighted the iterative nature of analysing qualitative data. This was also the case in the analyses that took place for this study, that is, analyses for me, were a set of processes in which each new analysis was built on those analytical processes that had gone before (see also Barton and Hamilton, 1998 p. 2003).

As a researcher, I was particularly cognizant of the fact that both the participant and I were making sense of ideas discussed in each interview or journal entry. As a consequence, I felt it was important to reflect on whose perspective I was foregrounding at any particular moment. I took account of these differences by creating categories which enabled me to be mindful of these differences. For example, in Theme A (Figure 6) and its codes there was a code called 'Identity/roles – researcher reading into data' and a code called 'stories about gender and work/professional contexts'. The latter code referred to stories the participants told about gender related to their prior work and professional contexts, while the former code was attached to parts of the data in which I could be heard explicitly discussing gender. This reflects the perspective (as discussed in 3.6 of this thesis) that as a researcher, I was working across both emic and etic dimensions of the research.

Once I had read and re-read the data, and had begun to create broad categories that corresponded to the research questions. For example, with regard to gender, I searched for words which are traditionally connected to roles which are gendered, such as husband, partner or father, mother etc. I did this to locate extracts where gendered notions had either been referred to, or were being explicitly discussed. While I do not see notions of gender as always being primarily attached to these specific terms (or roles), I did find through my early readings of the transcripts and writing journals that searching for words like ones that are often marked as explicitly gendered, e.g. mother, allowed me to quickly focus on talk and writing in which the participants had been considering issues which might be considered gendered. Searching for these terms, then, enabled me to more easily locate areas of the text I felt deserved closer analytical scrutiny. The final codes are illustrated in the diagrams which represent Themes A, B and C below (Figures 6, 7 and 8).

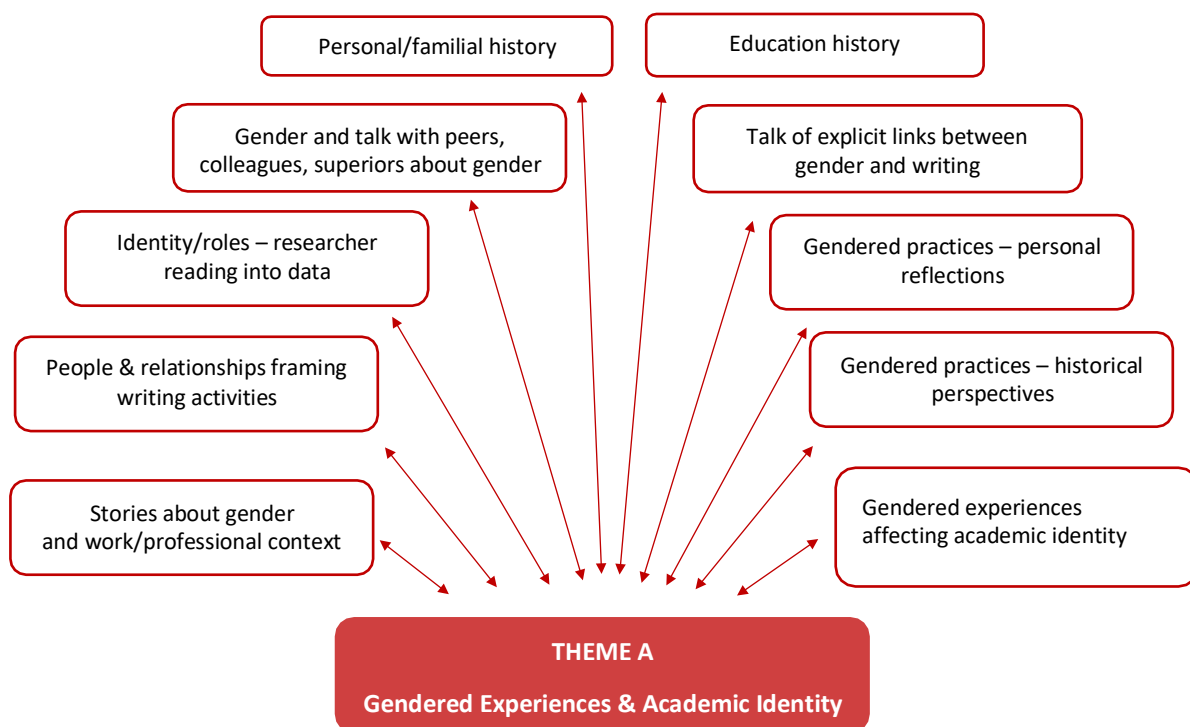


Figure 6 Gendered experiences and academic identity

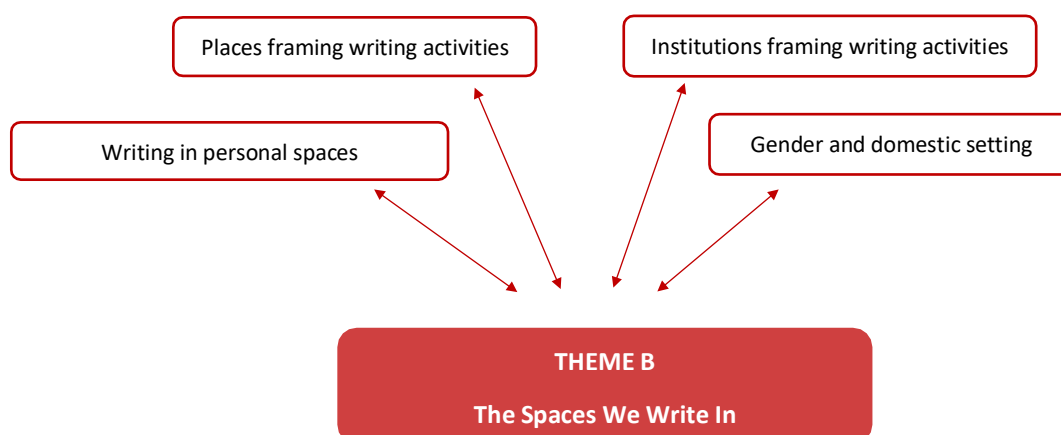


Figure 7 The spaces we write in

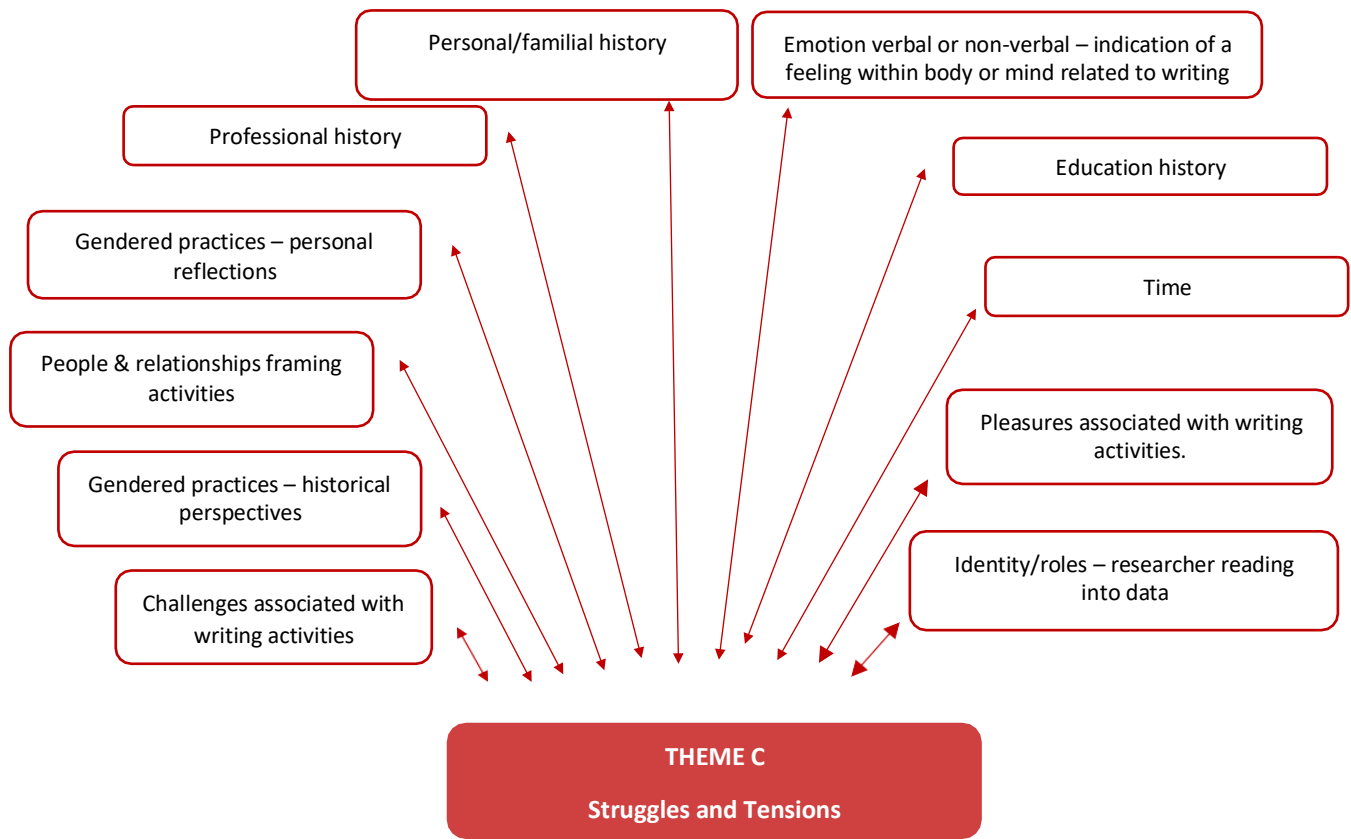


Figure 8 Struggles and tensions

In summary the three main themes generated through the reading and analyses undertaken for this thesis are:

- Gendered experiences and academic identity
- The spaces we write in
- Struggles and tensions

The data chapters that follow are each designed to explore and represent these themes.

Table 4 below shows how each of the main themes can be seen to connect with data chapters in this thesis.

Themes	Data Chapter Headings
Theme A: Gendered Experiences and Academic Identity	Chapter 6 Writing tales: struggles around writing; Chapter 7 Writing tales: reinventing space
Theme B: The Spaces We Write In	Chapter 5 Writing tales: crafting texts; Chapter 6 Writing tales: struggles around writing; Chapter 7 Writing tales: reinventing space
Theme C: Struggles and Tensions	Chapter 5 Writing tales: crafting texts; Chapter 7 Writing tales: reinventing space

Table 4 Connections between the main themes for the postgraduate research writing study and the data chapters

3.6.3 Documenting postgraduate writing

To empirically document the types of writing that postgraduates engage in, texts were collected and analysed in the following ways. First, the written texts volunteered for discussion in the interviews (see Table 3 for a complete overview) were labelled according

to names the participants had provided when discussing the texts in the interviews (see 3.6.1 for a discussion of the importance of the emic orientation, to this study). Second, the transcripts of the audio recordings of the interviews and all the writing journals were read and re-read to locate instances where other written texts the students had worked on over the two years of the data collection period were mentioned (see Figure 2 for an overview of a complete data-set over two academic years and Table 5 for a list of all texts documented in the study). These written texts were also labelled according to names the participants had provided when talking, or writing, about the written texts. The amount and range of texts, variation in relation to individuals and disciplinarity and the extent to which texts can be considered 'occluded' (Swales 1996) or institutionally visible is discussed in Chapter 4.

3.6.4 Exploring and representing postgraduates' perspectives and practices: Writing tales

A key unit of analysis and representation used is that of 'writing tales' which is the principle representational mechanism used to represent perspectives and practices in three of the four data-based chapters: *Writing tales: crafting texts* chapter, the *Writing tales: struggles around writing* chapter, and the *Writing tales: reinventing space* chapter.

The concept of the 'tale' is borrowed from Lather's (1991) use of term in which she used it to highlight the importance of 'what it means to write science differently' (p.123) – her use of the *tale* to write about her own research (1991) was a deliberate reminder to readers that there are a range of choices available to researchers when they choose to write about data, and each of these choices carry with it different potential effects. In practice, this meant that she crafted tales to represent data from a single research study as a series of stories – or 'vignettes' (p. 123) - each was drawing on the same data, but written differently. She told 'four different "stories"' (1991, p. 123) and named each *a realist tale; a critical tale; a deconstructive tale; and a reflexive tale* (p. 129 – 151). Below she describes what she sees as the fundamental differences between these perspectives:

Borrowing loosely from Van Maanen (1998), I call these [Lather's four tales] a realist tale, a critical tale, a deconstructive tale, and a reflexive tale. By "realist", I mean those stories which assume a found world, an empirical world knowable through adequate method and theory. By "critical" I mean those stories which

assume underlying determining structures for how power shapes the world By "deconstructivist" I mean stories that foreground the unsaid in our sayingAnd, finally, by "reflexive", I mean those stories which bring the teller of the tale back into the narrative, embodied, desiring, invested in a variety of often contradictory privileges and struggles. (Lather, 1991, p. 128 & 129)

The *writing tales* in this thesis, in terms of their epistemological orientation and rhetorical organisation, draw most heavily on two of Lather's tales, the *critical* (1991, p. 135-139) and the *realist* (1991, p. 129-135). There are other dimensions of this thesis which connect with Lather's *reflexive* and *deconstructive tales* (1991, 139-152), but before turning to an explanation of these, the reasons the *writing tales* in this specific thesis are referred to as *critical realist* are explained.

The *writing tales* in this thesis are *realist* in that they attempt to capture how the participants have gone about writing academically as lived, authentic experiences drawing on accounts and descriptions provided by participants but they are also *critical*, in the sense that they were written with the intention of signalling the social contexts surrounding, and structures underlying, the participants' academic writing practices. Specifically, for this thesis, the critical aspect focuses on the ways in which firstly, academic writing is a site of tension and struggle in the context of everyday lives and secondly, the extent and ways in which gender can be seen to be a significant dimension of the participants' practices and perspectives, in the context of their lives. The tales-as-texts have been constructed with these two dimensions - realist and critical - in mind. The realist dimension is evident in the attention to the ethnographic detail in each tale, that is, participants' perspectives, descriptions of the writing they are doing, descriptions of where academic research and writing fits into their lives both currently and historically. This realist dimension to the tales is, following Lather (1991, p. 128) 'grounded in [the participants] words'.

The critical dimension follows Lather (1991, p. 128) in seeking to foreground stories which 'assume underlying determining structures for how power shapes the world' (p. 128), with particular attention to gender. Rhetorically the critical dimension is evident in a number of ways: in interpretive commentary following realist accounts, foregrounding the significance of the account to understandings about academic writing; in focusing on aspects which

participants have signalled as troublesome or difficult in some ways; in focusing in particular, where gender emerges as significant in accounts.

The concept of the *tale* has been adopted as the primary mechanism for analysing and representing data in this thesis for two reasons. The first reason the *tale* is used throughout this thesis, is that it has acted as a rhetorical tool to write about the lived experiences of academic writing for postgraduate research writers – a way of drawing on the data to illustrate where, why, how and what postgraduate students write academically on a day-to-day basis. This is also important because it allows me to represent two important things about writing: first, I am able to represent the participants' writing practices in a way that is mindful of the complex and socially rich ways in which academic writing is carried out in people's lives; and second, the *tales* allow me to map, where appropriate, the experiences of the participants around their writing against extracts of the written texts they were producing.

A second reason *tales* have been chosen to represent data is to foreground the notion that *tales* are intended to illuminate rather than represent actual data, that any one version of one's academic writing practices (my version of a participant's writing for example) cannot claim to be a postgraduate student's writing practices in their entirety (also see Sealey, 2007, for an exploration of the significance of sociological realism in ethnographic research interested in language). Even though every effort is made, when writing a *tale*, to stay close to the data, writing *tales* inevitably means crafting a story, drawing together parts of the data which reflect the lived reality of a practice, but are also meaningful, and comprehensible, when placed together as a whole. *Tales* need to make sense to readers, and help them understand the reality of writing academically for each participant.

There are three different kinds of *critical-realist* writing tales presented in this thesis. There are *Writing tales: crafting texts* (Chapter 5) *Writing tales: struggles around writing* (Chapter 6) and *Writing tales: reinventing space* (Chapter 7). Each type of tale is focussed on drawing on interview data, writing journals, images and field notes collected for this research study to describe the participants' academic writing practices and their experiences around their writing. In each tale, a participant is introduced and the social, physical and - where relevant - emotional contexts of the participants' writing described. Whilst I have organised the tales into three thematic types according to the main focus,

they are of course closely interconnected in that they foreground the material and experiential reality of writing academically for the participants in the study. Each type of tale, however, has a slightly different emphasis, and I will now turn to an explanation of their differences below.

The tales in *Writing tales: crafting texts* are focussed on the production of specific written texts. Within these tales, although the social contexts of these texts are still a central aspect of the tales themselves, glimpses of entextualisation can be seen – moments where the ways in which a written text has come to exist are made visible. Thus extracts of the written texts are often significant parts of the tales. A key aim with this type of tale is to explore the significance of the writing of a particular written text to individual postgraduate researchers at a significant moment in the research trajectory. Understanding why and how these texts are meaningful to the participants is a specific driver in the presentation of these tales.

The second kind of tale used in this thesis is the *writing struggle tale*. These tales foreground the struggles and tensions around academic writing that postgraduates' experienced because struggle emerged as a particular theme in the data. The *writing struggle tales* are focused on the ways in which academic writing was carried out by the participants at the level of experience. The *writing struggle tales* draw together the parts of the data that provide information about the perspectives of the postgraduate writers on their writing. This often meant foregrounding different aspects of their writing and relating experiences that participants felt were meaningful to them in terms of their academic writing. These experiences foreground the autobiographical self/voice (Ivanič 1998, p.24) and include memories and, at other times, reflections on lived experiences that participants felt shaped their experience of writing as a research student.

The third type of tale that is used in this thesis is *writing space tales*. The *writing space tales* focus on the 'where' of writing. More specifically, these tales focus on the *places* in which academic writing occurred for the postgraduate writers and the ways in which these *places* were often re-imagined and re-invented by participants as writing spaces for their research-related writing. This type of tale foregrounds the dynamic and agentic nature of the participants when it comes to looking at their lived experience of writing academically.

It is important, too, at this stage to signal that the ways in which *tales* are used in this thesis are not limited to easily defined, or neatly locatable, times or places. The tales show how academic writing is picked up in different times and *spaces* and *places* and in different ways. The participants' writing rarely forms neatly cohesive, or linear narratives, and there is never a prescribed 'perfect' quantity of time in which to do writing. Therefore, some of the tales presented in this thesis are brief and are accounts of moments in which short, but meaningful texts were created, while others are longer and present more detailed information about aspects of the participants' writing. But all can be seen as meaningful in terms of what is significant to the writers about their own academic writing.

There are also dimensions of this thesis which can be seen to connect with Lather's two other categories: *reflexive* and *deconstructive* tales. These are my own reflexive writings included at different points in the thesis which seek to make me-as-researcher visible in the construction of this thesis. They also, in a deconstructive sense, serve to disrupt what some might see as a more 'conventional' genre of the thesis. The nature of such reflexivity and deconstruction is discussed further in 3. 8.

3.6.5 Transcription

The transcription key used to transcribe each interview is as follows. (For an example of a transcript of an interview see Appendix 3 of this thesis. The transcript in Appendix 3 is an interview with Cosima. Cosima's interview was chosen because it is drawn on multiple times throughout the thesis):

Transcription key

[?] indistinct/inaudible

... words have been taken out of the extract because of repetition or redundancy

[] Words added to the transcript to summarise a point made, or to add background information.

Fillers like 'um' 'ah' etc. were not transcribed

Standard punctuation was used to reflect natural pauses and improve the readability of the excerpts.

While transcribing the data for this study, I was mindful of the fact that transcription is always, on some level, an interpretation of raw data (Hammersley, 2010; Bucholtz, 2007).

The fact that transcription in interpretive means there are a range of choices available to a researcher when transcribing spoken data. Bucholtz (2007) discusses the different kinds of variation that can take place between different transcriptions. In doing this, Bucholtz looks at possible differences between representations of: 'notation and format' (p. 788); and different choices available to transcribers in terms of 'orthographic' conventions (p. 796) and 'translation[s]' (p. 800). In Bucholtz (2007) the potential impact of these different approaches to transcription on the research in which they are used is discussed. During my own research I was aware of the wide range of choices available to me in terms of transcription. For example, I was conscious that by adding elements of intonation, stress and rhythm to the transcripts of the interviews, depth and richness could, potentially, have been added to these texts. For primarily pragmatic reasons - the data-set was large and varied including 32 interviews and their accompanying written texts and field-notes, as well as writing journals and images - I decided to adopt a broad transcription method.

I transcribed the audio recordings from the interviews. The actual process of transcribing audio files involved listening and revising the transcripts several times. By repeatedly listening to the audio files, re-reading and revising of the transcriptions and cross-referencing these with other sources of data, my engagement with the data was enriched and enhanced understandings that were later drafted into the thesis.

3.7 Ethics

I engaged with three different institutional frameworks when considering the ethics of this study: the Ethics panel at the university in which I was doing my PhD; the ethical practice guidelines from the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL); and the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) framework for ethical conduct in research.

In the first instance, I followed the procedures of the university in which I was enrolled as a research student and the guidelines required of all research students and academics, which consisted of applying for approval to an ethics panel and explaining the steps I had taken to ensure the study was an ethical one. A specific query I addressed in response to the application for ethical clearance at my university was related to the fact that the study targeted women specifically (and not men). See Appendix 4 for an extract of the email sent

to the panel defending the choice to target women for the postgraduate research writing study.

Once this central query had been addressed, and the study's documentation supplied to the panel, I was then able to send a letter, or email of invitation, to all female, first year research students at USE (see Appendix 1). This included those doing masters-level research degrees, as well as those in the first year of a PhD programme or a Doctorate in Education (EdD). I chose to recruit research student-writers from a range of disciplines (see 3.4) because I saw the three factors I was researching, writing, perspectives and gender, as (potentially) important dimensions for these students. I also felt that sampling responses from a range of disciplines had the potential to play an important role in the study itself. In Appendix 5, I include the certification which demonstrates ethics approval for the postgraduate writing study.

I decided to work exclusively within USE because the number of students responding positively to my recruitment letters was positive, and the 16 students came from a wide range of disciplines offered at USE. This meant that the study could be carried out at a single site. This sustained commitment to one site was also in line with what some ethnographically oriented researchers have argued is necessary in an ethnographic study: the long-term observation of, and participation in, a specific culture (e.g. Hammersley, 2007, p.3).

Once the 16 students had been recruited, each were sent consent forms which provided factual information about the nature of the study. This paperwork explained clearly that all participants had a right to withdraw from the study at any time. This consent form can be seen in Appendix 6.

The second ethics body I paid careful attention to was the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) 'recommendations for good practice in applied linguistics'. BAAL specifically recommends, for example, that 'Applied linguists should not see approval by an ethics committee as absolving them from further ethical consideration as their research progresses' (BAAL, 2006, p.17). In line with this notion, I felt it was important to act ethically as the study progressed, and considered how to protect the participants' data, anonymity and right to clear and accurate information about the study.

Finally, I was mindful of British Educational Research Association's (BERA) 'ethical guidelines for educational research' (2011). BERA's requirement state that, for example, 'researchers must take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported' (2011, p. 5). Evidence of this kind of consultation with the participants of this study can be seen in the initial email sent out to all participants explaining and advertising the study (see the text used to invite the participants in Appendix 1).

In addition, I ensured that, after each interview I opened the discussion with each participant to their questions and queries. Frequently, participants had their own specific queries related to the study in general, or particular issues we had discussed in an interview. On the one hand, these questions and queries formed an important part of the long conversation we were taking part in (for detailed discussion read 3.3). On the other, I felt it was an ethical decision to engage participants in meaningful conversation, therefore offering a fairer representation of their perspectives

I will now turn to the importance of reflexivity and personal reflections in this thesis.

3.8 Reflexivity and the personal reflections in this thesis

Reflexivity is a practice carried out by researchers in which reflections on their research practices, and their own positioning as researchers are articulated in order to make explicit the ways in which a researcher's experiences and identifications have the potential to shape understandings and findings (see also discussions on 'insider' or emic perspectives in section 3.6). Below, Thien defines reflexivity and the concept of 'positionality' and its implications for research practice. This is followed by an exploration of the role and importance of reflexivity to my own research practice and to the writing of this thesis:

As a practice, reflexivity encourages researchers to explicitly consider their positioning within research encounters. Positionality has been defined as "describing the social and psychological context of historical and geographical agency" (McDowell & Sharp, 1999, p. 206). Reflexivity seeks to acknowledge, in necessarily limited ways, that this context affects...identities, and to consider the

consequences of such upon all elements of research, including interview encounters, participant observation and analysis...The ongoing value of reflexive practice is not to request that researchers generate definitive answers about matters of identity, their own or others; instead, the value is in the strategic method of 'keeping in mind' the dynamic place of identities, in all their social, political, cultural and spatial contexts, within research practice. (Thien, 2009, p. 353)

During the time this study was carried out I was a research student who was conducting interviews with other research students. Lather's reflexive tale 'A self-reflexive tale: the knowers and the known', a 'playlet' (1991, p. 146), represents a reflective discussion between four 'doctoral students' who had worked with Lather on analyses of qualitative data collected for a research study. In this 'playlet' Lather's student-researchers reflect on their personal experience of collecting and engaging with this data. Take, for example, the following extract:

I became totally just engulfed, immersed in the entries... [T]he stories were so compelling. It's our own personal perspective that came into play with the data. Even though we were doing it as "Patti's data," we were also looking at it as data that had personal meaning for us: one of us focused on social issues raised in the class, one on anger, one on labels people put on one another, one on what I as a curriculum leader in a school system can do to get more focus on women in the curriculum. (Lather, 1991, p. 147)

This extract from this 'playlet' is useful in that it illustrates how reflexivity can be carried out in practice. The student-researcher above is making his positioning clear, as well as making explicit reflections on the ways in which this positioning affects the analyses of the data (e.g. as a curriculum leader he was asked to focus more on the women in the curriculum). In this case, his 'insider' positioning was being taken up as a useful resource for analyses of the data.

My own reflexivity can be seen in the personal reflections I include in the thesis: see the five Personal Reflections across this thesis. I see these personal reflections as valuable in a thesis about postgraduate writing for two reasons. First, they tell real stories about the

challenges and pleasures I experienced writing this thesis. In this sense, I am hoping to demonstrate to readers that part of being an academic writer, for me, has meant managing real life issues: physical pain, caring for children, dealing with negative self-beliefs around my ability to write. Here, I am also making connections with feminist discourses around the value of feelings in research and meaning-making, drawing productively on my 'insider' positioning and, relatedly, using my experiences as an 'epistemic resource' (see Lutz, 2001). Second, by including personal reflections in the thesis, I am making connections, again, with the theoretical literature around re-inscription (see, for example, section 2.4 in which I discuss the work of, for example, Threadgold, 1997, Weedon, 1987 and Irigaray, 1985). My intention - to some degree - is to write differently, or to re-inscribe conventional thesis discourses. Throughout this process, I am drawing on the research and writings of theorists like Irigaray who sought to analyse and revise 'theoretical and historical texts – particularly those of philosophy and psychoanalysis'. Her intention with these analyses was to demonstrate how 'generated sedimented conceptions of women, materiality and femininity' have come about in conventional texts (in Deutscher, 2002, p. 18).

Reflexivity was also an important dimension to my developing practices as a research student. As the study progressed, I endeavoured to be as open and honest about who I was, what was being researched and why I felt it was important to carry out the research (also see my discussion on the value of field notes with respect to my own development as a researcher in 3.5). In practice, this also meant sharing my own stories about writing and researching in interviews with participants.

In terms of practice, there were also times where it was important to develop a sense of critical reflexivity, that is to actively cultivate a perspective which was outside the research context so that the events and experiences could be reported on in a way that was separate to my own experiences as a research student. Ultimately, gaining and sustaining a balance between insider and outsider perspectives was what I worked at as a researcher of postgraduate writers and their writing: knowing when I had to work at having a sense of distance so that I could describe both the familiar, as well as the unfamiliar was an important part of becoming a researcher.

The dimensions of reflexivity discussed above can be seen to strongly connect with the research questions. First, demonstrating an awareness of my own postgraduate academic

writing practices (RQ1). Second, I am working towards demonstrating the fact that I have actively sought out ways to value my own perspectives with regard to my writing practices (RQ2), and third, by foregrounding the lived, material realities of my writing – I am exploring, and highlighting the gendered nature of writing as a postgraduate research as it has been in my experience (RQ3).

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research questions driving this thesis were reiterated and the three areas delineated by the research questions, practices, perspectives and the significance of gender were explained (3.2). The epistemology underpinning the study (see 3.3) was introduced, in particular, the notion of the ‘long conversation’ and the epistemological significance of both interviews and writing journals, as a part of ‘long conversations’ were explained. At the level of epistemology, the notion of writing as a social practice was also defined. In 3.4 the 16 research students who participated in the study were presented, the manner in which they were recruited explained, and a complete overview of the data collected for each participant presented. In section 3.5 the methods employed to collect data for this postgraduate research writing study were described. This included explanations of how the texts and writing journals were collected; the interviews carried out; and how the field notes and photos were collated. In 3.6, I demonstrated the specific steps undertaken during analyses, and discuss the importance of the emic/etic continuum. Here, I also describe how the data were collated and analysed, and then, represented – in the form of writing tales. Within section 3.6, the ways I engaged with the data and how this engagement enabled me to produce, with the support of the qualitative data analysis software Atlas Ti, specific categories were also explained. An explanation of how the data were then organised into three main themes, gendered experiences and academic identity, the spaces we write in, and struggles and tensions was provided. In 3.6 I also explain how the mechanism of the tales allowed me to draw on, and represent, different types of data and adopt a critical realist stance. Finally, in 3.6 I explored key issues and decisions which were made with regard to transcription, and provide a transcription key. In 3.7, the different ways that this postgraduate research writing study has made efforts to be an ethical one were discussed, and I demonstrate how relevant aspects of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) ‘recommendations for good practice in applied

linguistics' and the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) 'ethical guidelines for educational research' were adopted to ensure this study was an ethical one. Finally, in 3.8, the ways in which reflexivity can be seen as an important dimension of this postgraduate research writing study were discussed. This included an explanation of the significance of personal reflections to the thesis.

I will now turn to the first data-based chapter which aims to document the amount and range of writing the postgraduate students were engaged in.

Personal reflection: The pain and pleasures of writing a thesis

At this stage of the thesis I write on the weekends after my daughter, Leila's, classes. I also write on the one and a half days a week I have off from teaching – this work helps us make ends meet financially (I am in my fourth year of this PhD, so this means that my funding has finished). In addition to this added pressure, Leila's father has not been well – he has been exhausted – and supporting him to get exercise and enough sleep benefits us all.

Consequently, I have had to take on most of the responsibility for my daughter, and I steal time to write whenever I can think clearly. Right now I am writing this in my bedroom with Leila playing in the room next to mine. My back, which also has episodes of pain from a slipped disc, is playing up and I have taken pain medication so I am able to sit still long enough to write. I have accepted the aches that come from sitting at a desk writing when my body doesn't want me to be there, I understand the fact that physical pain is part and parcel of making writing fit into my everyday existence – at least for the moment. So writing is not physically pleasurable, but I still think it is worth it. I still see it as a joy - perhaps a relief - to be given time to think and to reflect, and to very occasionally be creative. The writing is still my time.

But what am I writing about? At present, my writing is focussed on finding a shape for this thesis. My writing theme has very much been about how to organise and represent the data – how to present the interpretations and themes I see in the interviews, writing journals and written texts. In practice, this has meant spending time working on the chapter headings and sub-headings. The good news is that I have, at least partially, been able to overcome the blocked and frozen feeling I was experiencing whenever I so much as thought about putting pen to paper to bring shape and form to my thoughts. My supervisor's advice was to try to see this academic writing and gender study as something separate to me (although of course, in many ways, it is not). What she meant, I think, was that I needed to take action on the data – go through it step-by-step without feeling as if it was somehow a part of me. She pushed me to see the themes in the data on the data's own terms. This shift in attitude helped. Consequently, I am beginning to move forward and write. The data I have re-visited so many times these last few years is beginning to tell its story.

4 What do postgraduate research writers write?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended as a contribution to responding to the first research question driving this study, namely *What are the academic writing practices of research students in the first two years of their research studies at a UK based university?* It focuses explicitly on the written texts that postgraduates write, with the significance attached to the writing of such texts explored in subsequent chapters. Findings in this chapter are drawn from several sources: the written texts specifically brought to interviews for discussion; the written texts mentioned by participants in their interviews; and texts mentioned in the writing journals over the two years of the study. The chapter begins by investigating the number and range of texts (4.2). It then maps the participants against the written texts which were sent electronically in advance of the interviews, and in a few cases brought in as hardcopy to the interviews, or were mentioned in interviews or writing journals (4.3). In 4.4 these written texts are organised into disciplinary fields, and this is followed by an analysis of the texts by positioning them on a cline from occluded to visible (Swales, 1996) in 4.5. This discussion then presents extracts from three participants' written texts, selected to demonstrate different points on the occluded to visible cline. The conclusion draws together key findings from across the chapter, focusing on patterns that emerged from each of the different areas of analyses.

4.2 The number and range of texts

This section aims to provide an overview of the kinds of writing carried out by postgraduate students by drawing on several data sources: the written texts collected during the study that were specifically brought to interviews for discussion; written texts mentioned by participants in their interviews, and texts mentioned in the writing journals over the two years of the study. I begin by providing an overview of the number and range of texts documented. Table 5 is a complete list of these written texts in alphabetical order. It is important to note that each postgraduate student is likely to have written more written texts than those listed below in the formative years of their research studies, as the participants were not asked to list every text they wrote. However, by documenting those texts that the participants saw as valuable to the ongoing progress of their research (see

3.5) the list provides a useful picture of the types and range of writing carried out by postgraduate students in the early years of their research studies, as well as an indication of those texts postgraduate students perceive as significant.

-
1. Abstract (4x)
 2. Appendices (1x)
 3. Article written for publication (2x)
 4. Blog (1x)
 5. Case-study (2x)
 6. Chapter of a thesis (7x)
 7. Coursework assignment (7x)
 8. Curriculum-Vitae (1x)
 9. Document written in preparation for supervision (11x)
 10. Email to supervisors (2x)
 11. Gantt chart (1x)
 12. Information document written to support policy- level work (1x)
 13. Job application (1x)
 14. Literature review (6x)
 15. Monthly plan (1x)
 16. Philosophical statement written during data collection (1x)
 17. Probation report (10x)
 18. Progress report (2x)
 19. Questionnaire (3x)
 20. Records of lab work (4x)
 21. Research plan with supervisor's annotations (1x)
 22. Research poster (1x)
 23. Research proposal (4x)
 24. Review of an academic book (1x)
 25. Supervision minutes (1x)
 26. Survey (1x)
 27. Thesis (2x)
 28. Thesis-plan (1x)
 29. Transcript (2x)
-

Table 5 Written text types produced during postgraduate study (as documented from across the dataset)

As Table 5 indicates, postgraduate students produce a wide range of text types as part of their studies. A total of 82 texts from the 16 participants were identified with 29 different

text types. These text types range from those which are records of postgraduate writers' reflections on their own writing (see for example Cosima's philosophical statement in Table 7) and a curriculum vitae (see, for example, Renee's written texts in Table 7) to submitted thesis chapters which will become part of the final thesis.

Table 6 organises these twenty-nine text types into groups according to their broad functions within a research studies environment. The categories were generated by looking at the specific purpose of each written text in a research studies environment. For example, transcript, survey and questionnaire were classified as *working with data* because each text was closely connected to the collection and representation of data. The final functional categories were: *employment related*; *administering research*; *working with data*; *postgraduate research planning*; *reflections written during research*; *reporting on research progress*; *coursework assignments*; *parts of a thesis* and *full thesis drafts*.

As described in Methodology, Chapter 3, the written texts were named through careful readings of all of the interview transcripts to locate instances where texts were mentioned by the participants. The actual labels for the written texts were those used by participants to refer to their texts. The text type that was collected and/or mentioned the most were those classified as *documents written in preparation for supervision* (11), followed by *probation reports* (10), and *chapters of theses* (7) and *coursework assignments* (7) reflecting the importance of communications with supervisors and the completion of coursework, and probationary texts in the Master in Research and Doctorates in Education. In total, there were 14 instances where a type of text was only collected and/or mentioned once (see for example, the *blog* and *Gantt chart*). These sub-totals indicate the wide range of texts first and second year postgraduate research students are engaging in, and the high rate of differences between individuals in terms of the types of writing they are carrying out.

Employment related	Administering research	Working with data	PG research planning	Reflections written during research	'Convention al' academic genres	Reporting on research progress	Coursework assignments	Parts of a thesis	Full thesis drafts
X1 curriculum vitae	X11 documents written in preparation for supervision	x2 transcripts	x1 thesis plan	x4 records of lab work	x1 research poster	x2 progress reports		x6 literature reviews	x2 theses
X1 job application	x4 research proposals for PhD application	x1 survey	x1 Gantt chart	x1 blog	x2 articles written for publication		x7 coursework assignments	x7 chapters of theses	
X1 information document written to support policy-level work	x2 emails to supervisors	x2 case-studies	x1 monthly plan	x1 philosophical statement written during data collection	x1 review of an academic book			x1 appendix	
	x1 Supervision minutes	x3 questionnaires	x1 research plan with supervisors' annotations		x4 abstracts *3 are conference abstracts				
					x10 probation reports				
Total: 3	Total: 18	Total: 8	Total: 4	Total: 6	Total: 18	Total: 2	Total: 7	Total: 14	Total: 2

Table 6 Texts arranged into functional groups

Texts arranged into functional groups

In Table 6, the functional categories reflect the different kinds of academic writing and research-related activities that postgraduates engaged in. The categories were generated by considering the primary rhetorical function of each text, or the ways that the texts can be seen as produced to facilitate or support a particular research activity. For example, texts produced which were central to the planning activities of the research students were a thesis plan; a Gantt chart; a monthly plan, and a research plan with supervisor's annotations. An additional group was labelled *working with data* to draw attention to the fact that transcripts, surveys, case-studies and questionnaires were all useful to individuals as they collected or represented data in the formative years of their postgraduate writing. Then, on the right of the table above, there are 16 written texts which have been labelled *parts of a thesis* or *full thesis drafts*. While it could be argued that all writing produced by the postgraduate research writer is ultimately designed to feed into the thesis or dissertation, these are texts explicitly referred to by students as *thesis drafts*, or *parts of a thesis*, or similar signaling their status also as discrete texts.

4.3 Individual variation

Whilst the data indicates that clearly a wide range and number texts were being produced, there is some individual variation. Table 7 is a list of the 82 texts introduced above, organised in alphabetical order of participant. This Table also lists the number of specific texts documented according to participant. The table highlights the individual variation that was occurring between participants. Where a text is listed twice beside a participant's name, it signals that different versions of the same text were either discussed on separate occasions, or they were in fact separate texts. The diversity of texts produced by individuals in the formative years of their research studies is exemplified by Aisha (the first participant listed). In the two years in which she participated in the postgraduate writing study, she produced a probation report, three coursework assignments, a research proposal, an abstract for a conference and a chapter of a thesis (see Table 7). Of the 16 postgraduate research students, one science student mentioned the greatest number of written texts: 12 texts were recorded for Renee (a probation report, a progress report, a chapter of a thesis, four records of lab work, a document written in preparation for supervision, a Gantt chart, a curriculum vitae, a thesis plan and an abstract) indicating that

more research may be needed into the many different kinds of writing that science students are engaging in as research students. For example, records of lab work are potentially rich, and under researched texts, in terms of exploring academic literacies in research student contexts.

Another interesting aspect of the texts when organised against individual participants is that there are not always obvious connections between the separate written texts produced by one participant; see, for example, Cosima's texts. Her written texts are: a literature review, a philosophical statement written during data collection, an email to supervisors and a blog. There are not obvious connections between these texts (in the same way that, for example, a literature review might feed into a thesis), but they are all part of Cosima's research process. In this sense, the list of individual students and their texts provides glimpses into the sometimes highly personal, or individual, nature of writing within postgraduate research study.

Participants	The participants' written texts
Aisha	Abstract, Chapter of a thesis, Coursework assignment x3 ¹ , Probation report, Research proposal
Alison	Coursework assignment x2, Chapter of a thesis, Research plan with supervisor's annotations, Research proposal
Anna	Monthly plan, Literature review, Thesis
Catherine	Document written in preparation for supervision x2, Email to supervisors, Literature review, Probation report x2, Survey, Transcript
Clara	Abstract, Chapter of a thesis, Document written in preparation for supervision x2, Literature review,
Cosima	Blog, Email to supervisors, Literature review, Philosophical statement written during data collection
Elise	Probation report x3
Ellie	Document written in preparation for supervision x2, Chapter of a thesis
Gaby	Abstract, Coursework assignment, Document written in preparation for supervision
Jessica	Information document written to support policy-level work, Probation report, Research poster, Questionnaire
Pippa	Coursework assignment, Job application, Literature review, Research proposal x2
Renee	Abstract, Chapter of a thesis, Curriculum-Vitae, Document written in preparation for supervision, Gantt chart, Probation report, Progress report, Records of lab work x4, Thesis-plan
Samantha	Appendices, Chapter of a theses, Document written in preparation for supervision, Literature review, Probation report, Progress report, Review of an academic book, Thesis, Transcript
Sophia	Chapter of a thesis, Probation report
Valerie	Article written for publication x2, Case-study x2, Document written in preparation for supervision, Questionnaire x2
Yasmin	Document written in preparation for supervision, Supervision minutes

Table 7 Participants' written texts with participants in alphabetical order

¹ Where a text has a number beside it indicates two or more different versions of a text were discussed, or that they were separate texts.

Table 7 demonstrates the different kinds of writing that occur at the individual level for postgraduate students from a range of disciplines, in the formative years of their studies. I will now turn to a discussion of these same texts in terms of the disciplinary fields they are being produced within.

4.4 Texts according to disciplinary fields

Disciplinary area is an important way of considering the range of texts identified in the study. Labelling disciplinary areas is not straightforward of course because students might be formally positioned within a disciplinary area (generally equating to a department at USE), but in practice draw on a number of different disciplinary traditions and discourses. The terms used to label the disciplinary fields in this thesis are the names of the USE schools in which the postgraduate research writers were pursuing their qualifications: Business; Education; Wellbeing and Social Care; Physical Science; Mathematics and Statistics. While (as I have mentioned) this is potentially problematic, this does enable insights into the writing involved in the specific disciplinary area that each postgraduate student was working within.

One broad way of considering disciplinary areas is to map the written texts onto a soft/hard, pure/applied quadrant. Biglan (1973) and Kolb's (1981) quadrant, modified by Becher (1989) and as described by Leedham (2011), illustrates how disciplines can be categorised according to hard/soft and pure/applied. Leedham (2011, p. 65) explains that "'hard-pure" disciplines include Mathematics and the Natural Sciences with their well-defined boundaries of knowledge and the cumulative growth of findings'. In contrast, 'soft-pure' subjects (e.g. 'Law and Humanities' in Leedham, 2011) tend to merge at points with other disciplines and consist of a range of theoretical models which can be in tension with one another. 'Hard-applied' disciplines usually relate to knowledge which investigates and supports the work humans do with the 'physical world 'as typified by Engineering', whereas, 'soft-applied' disciplines like ('Education and Social Administration') are based on real-life bodies of knowledge generated through individuals' working within, and engaging with, 'human society' (Leedham, 2011, p. 65).

In Figure 9, the disciplines of the students in the postgraduate research student study are mapped against the disciplinary quadrant.

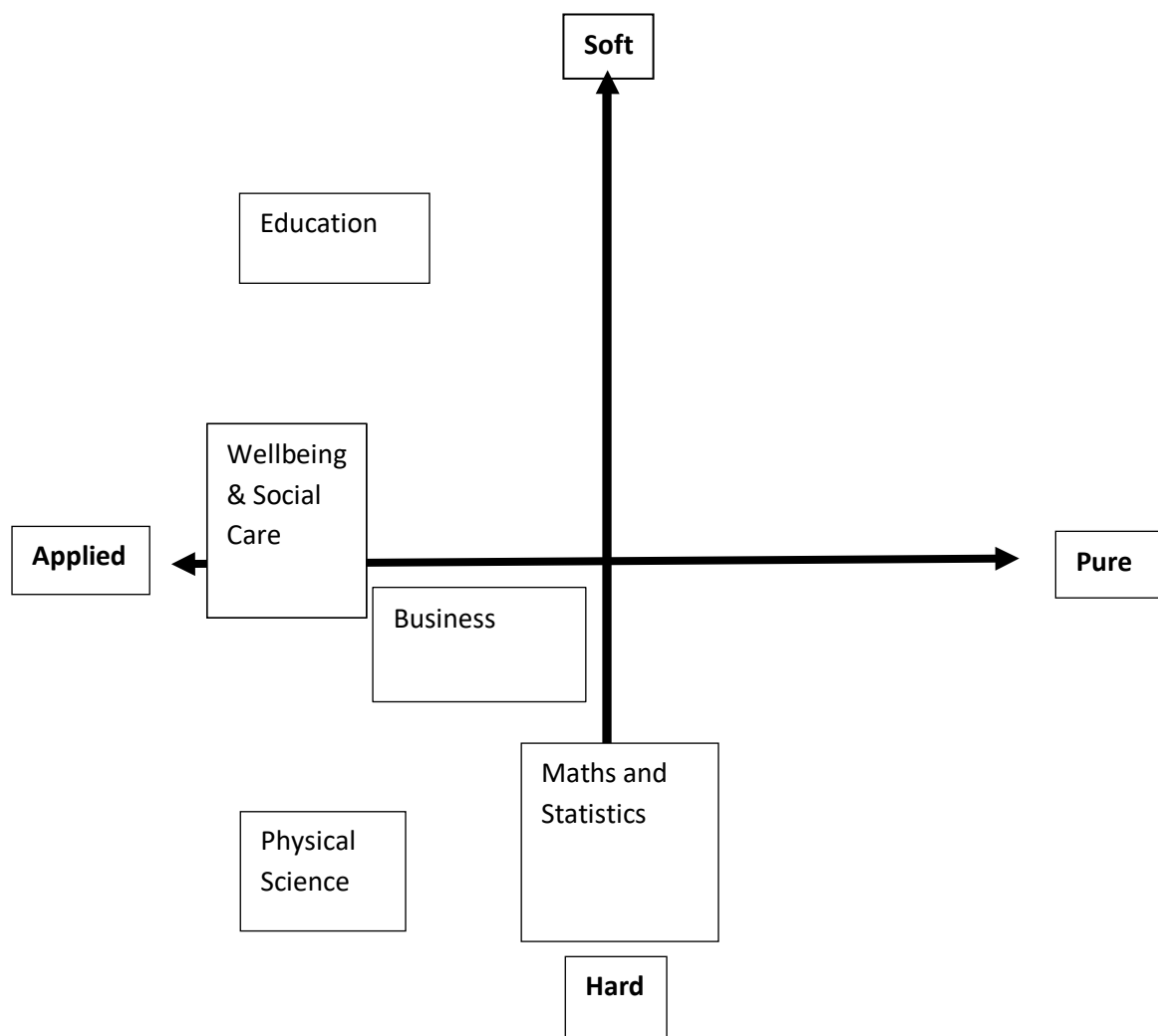


Figure 9 Disciplines in the study, arranged on 'hard-soft', 'pure-applied' dimensions (based on Biglan, 1973; Kolb, 1981)

As can be seen in Figure 9, the disciplinary areas of participants in the study are almost entirely 'applied' and spread across the 'hard' and 'soft' end of the continuum. Of course, at the same time it is important to note that disciplines – and by extension disciplinary areas – are not fixed and often cover a range of areas along both continua. For example, *Education* is generally considered soft and applied because the work done in these areas can be seen as working within more fluid conceptions of knowledge (soft), and very often grounded in actual (or lived/professional) experiences (applied). A theoretical consideration of education, however, would be positioned in the applied/pure continuum.

Similarly, as discussed, naming disciplines according to the school each postgraduate research student was situated was not straight forward. For example, in the case of the USE's research students, Valerie, a student who is writing about the topic of *public science*, was drawing on both hard/pure disciplinary knowledge within science, but also drawing on discourses which enabled her to discuss the communication practices within science; these discourses might be more usefully considered as being derived from soft/applied disciplinary knowledge. Valerie's school is Education, a discipline which is most often situated on the soft/applied quarter of the quadrant (see Table 7 for texts that Valerie produced within her discipline).

What is also clear from the quadrant is that certain disciplinary areas are missing from the study on which the thesis is based, some examples are: Law, Engineering and Architecture.

Figure 9 is provided to give an overview of the disciplinary areas covered in the study rather than to make claims about the specific aspects of participants' research areas. A further mapping of the functional groupings of text types from Table 6 reveals the number of text types produced in the disciplinary areas of this study (see Table 8 below).

A

Disciplines	Parti- pants	Employment related	Administering research	Working with data	Postgraduate research planning	Reflections written during research	'Convent- ional' academic genres	Reporting on research progress	Parts of a thesis	Course work assign- ments	Full thesis drafts	TOTAL
Business	4		√√√√√				√√√	√	√√√√	√√		16
Education	6	√√	√√√√√√	√√√√√√	√√	√√	√√√√ √√		√√√√ √√	√√√√	√√	37
Wellbeing & Social Care	3		√√√√√	√√			√√√√		√√	√		14
Maths & Statistics	1						√		√			2
Physical Science	2	√			√√	√√√√	√√√√	√	√			13
TOTAL	16	3	18	8	4	6	18	2	14	7	2	82

Table 8 Mapping functional groupings of text types against disciplinary areas in the study

It is important to note other ways in which functional groupings cut across disciplinary areas. Table 8 suggests that there are some types of written texts which feature more prominently in some disciplinary areas, though only tentative claims can be made here due to the small number of participants, and variation between the numbers of participants in each discipline. For example, only postgraduate writers in Business, Education, and Wellbeing and Social Care reported written texts which were categorised as *Administering Research*. The *Conventional Research genres* category and the *Administering Research* categories constituted the largest categories of texts (18 each) compared to the other categories, this was followed by *Parts of a Thesis* (14 texts). Interestingly, 37 of the 82 texts were provided by the six Education students accounting for nearly half of all the written texts, and the two Physical Science students (12.5% of all of the participants) provided thirteen texts overall, which is close to 16% of all written texts (if all texts were distributed evenly, each participant would have submitted close to 5 texts). In all of the disciplines *parts of a thesis* or *conventional academic genres* were documented; while only in Education and Physical Science employment related texts were documented. Overall, Table 8 demonstrates that all disciplines, including Physical Science - with the exception of Maths and Statistics who reported a small number and variety of written texts including a *conventional academic genre* and *a part of a thesis* – tended to write a wide range of different kinds of written texts throughout the formative years of their research degrees.

4.5 Occluded and visible texts

The text types listed in Table 5 include, as already discussed, texts which are strongly visible in institutional terms and also in research exploring postgraduate academic writing, such as research analysing theses or dissertations (for example, Charles, 2011; Thompson, 2005 and 1999; Paltridge, 2002). Table 5 also indicates however the many other text types in which postgraduate student writers engage such as records of laboratory work (see Renee's texts in Table 7 above) and supervision minutes (see Yasmin's texts in Table 7 above) which are rarely acknowledged and receive minimal pedagogical or research attention. One important way of conceptualising the range of text types in postgraduate academic writing is to draw on Swales' (1996) concepts of 'visible' and 'occluded', according to how they are perceived within the institution. The terms 'visible' and 'occluded' were coined by Swales (1996) in relation to academic writing, arguing that there

are both occluded (or less visible genres) as well as visible genres in academia. His definition of occluded (in contrast to visible) was based primarily on the audience: that is, he argued occluded genres are “out of sight” to outsiders and apprentices (such as graduate students) (2004, p. 18)’. Table 9 is a table from Swales in which he labels a ‘partial list of occluded genres’ (2004, p. 18):

External evaluations (for academic institutions)

- A. Evaluation letters for tenure and promotion (for committees)
 - B. Book or grant proposal reviews
 - C. Reviews of articles submitted to refereed journals
 - D. Discussions between examiners
 - E. Research grant proposals
 - F. Application, invitation, request, submission, and editorial-response letters
 - G. Initiating or responsive phone calls and e-mails
-

Table 9 Partial list of occluded genres (Swales, 2004, p. 18)

I have adopted the terms ‘occluded’ and ‘visible’ because (in addition to Swales’ reasons) the terms enable me to highlight the fact that a range of postgraduate written texts are produced, some of which are ‘assessed’, while others are not. An aim of the study was to explore the extent to which ‘occluded’ texts formed part of postgraduates’ writing practices and the potential significance of these to writers.

In this thesis, occluded texts are considered to be those written texts which are less visible in that they are not necessarily produced, in the first instance, for any form of pre-determined formal assessment within a research degree. Visible texts, in contrast, are widely acknowledged in institutional documentation and pedagogical practices (for example, the thesis or dissertation). Higher education institutions usually require research students to successfully complete theses or dissertations if they are to make progress on their research degrees. A document can be seen in Appendix 7 of this thesis which is an example of USE’s requirements for a research-student probation report. Although certain texts will be used differently at different higher education institutions, at USE, the

probation report is an assessed written text, in contrast to the progress report. In Figure 10, I illustrate the occluded/visible concept by presenting a selection of written texts collected during the postgraduate research writing project and positioning them at three key points (indicated by the different shading) along a cline of visible to occluded.

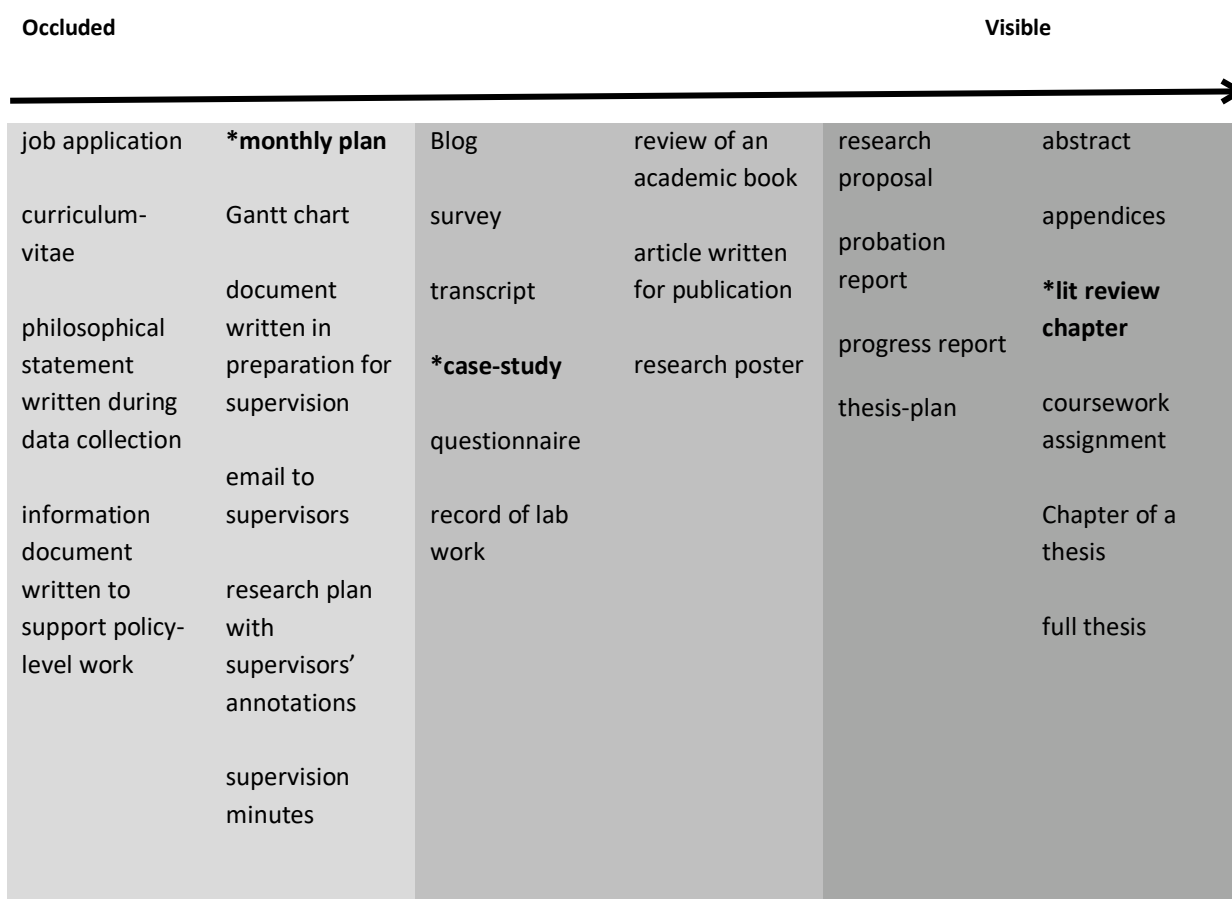


Figure 10 A sample of texts arranged on a cline from occluded to visible ²³

The mapping of participants' texts onto this cline is not straightforward as the concept of 'visibility' is a contested one. While a completed thesis is unarguably visible in that it is assessed and is then available via a library or e-thesis collection, at the other end of the continuum a job application may be invisible within the institution or may be made visible through its mention in a regular progress report. Similarly, a blog, for example, may be considered invisible in terms of not being assessed, but could be the most visible and

² **Indicates that an extract of an actual text is presented below in Figures 11, 12 and 13.*

³ *The different shading represents three groups of written texts, ranging from the most occluded, to the most visible.*

widely read of all the participants' writing if it has a wide reach. Journal articles may or may not be occluded depending on institutional assessment requirements: universities globally are increasingly making publication a pre-requisite to being awarded a PhD (Lillis and Curry, 2018) but in USE no such requirement existed at the time of writing.

In Figures 11, 12 and 13, I have provided extracts from texts on three points on the cline in order to demonstrate the kinds of texts documented across the cline. Each of the texts has been taken from one of the three shaded areas above and is bolded and signalled with an asterisk (*) in Figure 10. Below these extracts I provide a brief analysis of the function of each text and each text's degree of visibility.



Figure 11 An extract from a monthly plan

Case Study – Michael

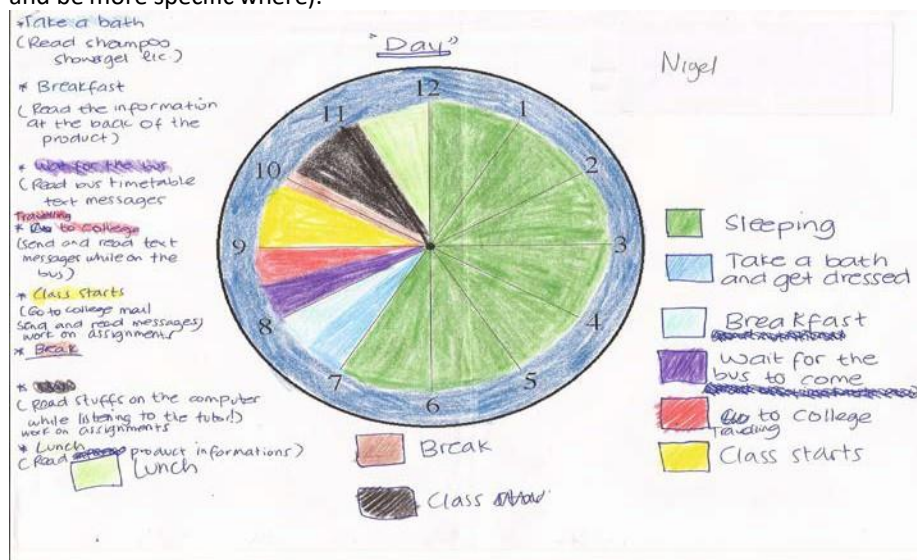
Biographical details:

Michael is a 16 year old student who attends Leichardt College of Further and Higher Education, he is one of **[sic] students studying for a qualification in the computing and IT department. He came to college with General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in English, French and Computing. [...] My research intervention has included holding a semi structured, initial interview with Michael during the first few weeks of semester one. This interview aimed to discover more about Michael's educational background, why he chose to study for a qualification in IT, and what his aspirations were for the future. I began the interview by asking Michael to tell me something about himself; [...]

This biographical information gives a snapshot of Michael's educational background, his likes, dislikes and where he sees himself in the future. This account is a comprehensive summary of the semi - structured individual interview held at Leichardt College.

Everyday Literacy Practices

[...] To build a picture of Michael's everyday literacy practices, I have used research intervention and I have asked Michael and other students in a supporting study session to complete a clock activity. This clock activity was designed by Ivanic et al. (2009) for their research with FE college students, the activity is replicated here and discussed previously in the research design section of this thesis (check and be more specific where).

**Michael's clock**

In Michael's response to the clock activity (appendix **) [sic], he indicates that at lunchtime he reads product information and for 1 hour 45 minutes in lesson time he "go(es) to college email send and read messages, work on assignments reads stuffs on the computer while listening to the tutor (and) work(s) on assignments" During college time he sends and reads text messages while working on assignments. Literacy practices engaged with at other times of the day include reading the bus timetable, information on the back of products including reading shampoo/ shower gel details. In the questionnaire following the clock activity (Appendix clock Q) [...]

Figure 12 An extract from a case study⁴

⁴ An extract of the participant's original case-study text. Where I have deleted text, I have added in [...].

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is a review of relevant literature related to the research questions why, when and how does numeracy anxiety develop in some healthcare students? An extensive literature search has been undertaken initially using the Education Resources Education Centre (ERIC) and Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) databases. Several texts were sourced, read and then further sources identified within those texts were followed up, read and so on. The terms numeracy, maths and mathematics (and math in the USA) are all used within the literature related to anxiety related to number manipulation. The term chosen for this study is 'numeracy' as this most closely reflects the skills that students need to demonstrate within their clinical practice, although the majority of the literature relates to 'maths'. The wider terms 'mathematics' or 'maths' will be used where they are used by the original authors, as a change to the narrower term numeracy could alter the context and meaning of the original material in some cases. The literature review is focussed on and around the issue of anxiety related to numeracy or maths, but also explores wider related issues such as anxiety generally and the wider teaching and learning of mathematics.

It is widely recognised that numeracy anxiety does exist and that it is a significant problem amongst healthcare students (Hutton 1998, Sabin 2001, Glaister 2007) and there is extensive recent and current research aimed at developing strategies to help overcome this problem (Farrand et al 2006, Moriarty et al 2008, Bull 2009). However when trying to focus a literature search around the specific questions of why, when and how numeracy anxiety develops in some healthcare students, there appears to be a paucity of specific literature [...]

Figure 13 An extract from a literature review

Each of the written texts above serves a specific function in terms of the research study being carried out by a postgraduate researcher (the participants in this postgraduate writing project). First, in Figure 11 a monthly plan is being used by a student in the physical sciences (Renee) and one of its primary functions appears to be tracking when 'cell counts' and 'samples' need to be taken. The participant also includes reminders to herself related to when two different threads of an experiment (Experiment 1, parts A and B) will end. Renee can be seen to be crossing each day out as the month progresses, indicating where she is in her experiment, at a glance, at any day of the month. In terms of its overarching function, this monthly plan can be seen as more than a set of reminders: it is a record, or ongoing narrative of an aspect of her experiment. The text is documentation which she could, potentially, draw on later when she is writing a range of different texts. In terms of the visibility of the text, this has been classified as one of the more occluded texts (Figure 10).

This classification has been given to signal that this text was not assessable in its current form to the same degree, for example, as a thesis, but might be seen as equally important to the success of Renee's research in terms of her tracking her work in the laboratory.

The second text, a case study (Figure 12), is an extract from a written text that the participant and her supervisors are in the process of crafting. The case-study's function is to assist the researcher in understanding more about the literacy practices of one of her participants. She begins by providing biographical details about the participant she is writing a case-study about. This is then followed by a description of the 'research intervention', and a diagram (a clock) that her participant has coloured in which he describes the different kinds of literacy practices he has engaged in during his day. The text, has been positioned on the cline in Figure 10 as slightly more visible than the monthly plan above, in that it is closer to becoming part of a thesis and therefore, an assessable text.

The third text, a literature review (Figure 13), begins by the author explaining the search parameters she applied to investigate the research topic: 'anxiety and numeracy'. The second paragraph of the literature review then begins to provide some broad commentary about the kinds of literature that is available which ash investigated anxiety and numeracy. The function of the third text, then, is to delineate the literature that will underpin the study that the postgraduate writer is carrying out. This text is clearly an even more visible text than the case-study, in that it is an extract from a literature review which was formally assessed as part of the postgraduate writer's studies.

What is interesting about all three texts is that they each focus on a different dimension of the research process. The first text is tracking an experiment, the second forms part of the data for a study, and the third is focussed on the literature that will frame and drive a study. Section 4.6 has shown that while each text can be considered more or less visible than the other in terms of assessable content, each serves an important function and is equally significant to the research process. Similarly, each text can be seen as having the potential to become more visible, in that it will likely feed into more conventional academic genres such as theses or articles for publication.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4 has documented the number and range of texts written by postgraduates during the formative years of their research qualifications based on data collected for discussion in interviews, and the written texts mentioned or referred to in interviews or writing journals. In total, there were 82 written texts collected and/or mentioned, which I have categorised into 29 text types. Each of these text types has been organised according to function, individual variation and disciplinary areas. Key findings were that postgraduate research students in the formative years of their research degrees produce a wide range of different text types. At the individual level, there is great diversity between the number and range of texts written (for example, there were fourteen instances where a text type was produced by only one participant). There were however some patterns across the disciplines. For example, *parts of a thesis* and *conventional academic genres* were mentioned by at least one participant in all disciplines. Similarly, some patterns were evident across the entire data-set, for example, the text type which was most frequently discussed in the study was *documents written in preparation for supervision* (x11) indicating that the activity of communicating interim thinking and data about a participant's research was a significant activity in the first two years of research degrees. The lens of occluded and visible was also brought to bear on the written texts, highlighting the fact that many texts are more visible at an institutional level (for example, the thesis), while others are more occluded (for example, supervision notes). However, no matter where texts are situated on this occluded-visible spectrum, all the texts can be seen as valuable in different ways to postgraduate students in terms of making progress with their research. The examples of written texts presented at the end of this chapter illustrated this, with, for example, the most occluded text (the monthly plan) recording valuable information about the progress of an experiment.

I will now turn to Chapter 5, *Writing tales: crafting texts*, in which participant's individual accounts of writing specific texts are foregrounded, highlighting the lived experiences of postgraduates as they developed some of the written texts discussed in Chapter 4.

5 Writing tales: crafting texts

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 offered an account of the range and types of writing that postgraduates engage in. This chapter turns to explore struggles experienced around the crafting of some of the texts written by postgraduate students during their formative years of postgraduate study. The specific texts forming the basis for these tales have been chosen to highlight the full range of writing carried out by participants and key aspects of their experience of writing texts. The tales illustrate the challenges around developing ‘voice’ in postgraduate academic writing, a notion I discuss in 5.2 below, (see also Chapter 2, 2.5; and Chapter 6, 6.2) and have been chosen to present both occluded and visible texts (see 4.5), with both clearly perceived as significant to writers. This chapter connects with both the first and second research questions driving this thesis (see 3.2), questions which are focussed on academic writing practices and the perspectives of postgraduate students about their academic writing.

Each tale is given a heading which denotes the person, the key theme as expressed by the participant and synthesized by me the researcher, and the specific text that prompted discussion. They begin with brief biographical information drawing on ethnographic data in order to contextualise the accounts of individuals’ academic writing and foreground writing as a lived experience. They then focus on participants crafting specific texts and struggles related to the crafting of those texts. The tales are organised in such a way that the more visible texts are presented first (coursework essays) and the final text tale presents a more occluded text (a discussion document requested by a senior academic). The chapter concludes by drawing together patterns across the tales to highlight key points of significance to writers and signals key dimensions to postgraduate writing in the higher education context.

5.2 Voice and the crafting of texts

When postgraduate students write academically, they are engaged in the crafting of texts in that they are constantly making decisions regarding the omission and inclusion of certain textual details. The authorial decisions that constitute the crafting of a text might usefully

be seen as the cultivation of voice (see Chapter 2, section 2.5 for further discussion of academic writing, gender and voice).

There are three dimensions which are helpful when exploring the importance of voice to postgraduate students who are crafting specific texts. These dimensions are: 1) voice and identity (see Chapter 2, section 5 where I discuss the significance of voice in academic writing practices to an exploration of academic writing and gender.) ; 2) voice and addressivity; 3) voice in relation to occluded and visible texts. All three dimensions are explored in the tales below.

In relation to the first dimension, voice and identity, the identity heuristic presented in Chapter 2 (section 2.5) of this thesis provided a way of exploring dimensions of the writers' experience that were significant to authors while they were writing specific texts. The heuristic illustrates the tensions underpinning the relationship between identity and voice in academic writing by drawing attention to Clark et al (1990), Fairclough (1992) and Ivanič's (1995) key questions, the 'who', 'how' and 'what' of academic writing; who can you be? how can you say it? and what can you say?. These questions foreground the ways in which postgraduate academic writers often find themselves grappling with issues around what they feel they are 'allowed' (or not) to write and how they feel constrained or enabled when making decisions about written texts.

The second dimension of relevance to the exploration of voice in academic writing is that of addressivity. The Bakhtinian notion of addressivity, both actual and imagined (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 95) is central to voice and the crafting of texts in that all meaning-making (voicing) is always in response to another; another person, another text (see discussion in Lillis, 2001, p. 56 and 57). The importance of addressivity to students as they crafted their texts was strongly evident (see in particular Ellie's and Valerie's tales). Exploring addressivity in the tales has therefore enabled a focus on the significance of different specific audiences (actual and imagined) for the postgraduate writers in their crafting of specific texts.

The third dimension of voice which is significant in the exploration of postgraduates' writing and illustrated in the tales below, relates to the importance of both occluded and visible texts in the crafting of texts, and writers' voices as postgraduate students. One key aim of the study was to explore the significance of all texts to individual postgraduate

students as they developed their academic voices, and the tales include examples of postgraduate students crafting occluded, as well as more institutionally visible texts.

I will now turn to the tales and illustrate the struggles experienced and the choices made by five postgraduate writers as they crafted voices for specific texts. By exploring voice in relation to three dimensions – identity, actual and imagined addressees and occluded and visible texts – in the crafting of specific texts, insights into their struggles and choices can be generated.

5.3 Pippa's Writing Tale: confusion about what academic texts and discourses should look like (coursework essays)

Pippa was pursuing a Master in Research in the Business school at USE in entrepreneurship and small business. Initially, this meant that she pursued a Master in Research (MRes) within the Business faculty at USE. She was subsequently granted an MRes qualification after one year of full-time study. Pippa's choice to pursue research in a Business school was motivated by her personal history with a small business selling rocking horses. However, she was also interested in a range of business related issues and had worked, for example, for well-known department stores in the UK. Although she applied to pursue a PhD at USE after acquiring her MRes, she did not gain a place. She then applied for several PhDs in business programmes at other universities in London and southern England, universities she felt were not too far away from her family for whom she had caring responsibilities, particularly her daughter who was also a mother and managing a long-term illness (interviews, May 2011 and April 2012). Pippa was offered self-funded places in research programmes at different universities but felt, for financial reasons, unable to pursue these. Finally, one year after being granted her Master in Research from USE, she was offered partial funding to pursue a full-time PhD at the Institute of Southern England (ISE), and with this partial funding, she began her PhD.

Before, transitioning to a new university, and during her MRes at USE, Pippa was commuting from her home an hour away from the USE campus. She drove from her home to the campus on the days that she had lectures, sometimes choosing to stay overnight at a small hotel located near USE. While pursuing her MRes, Pippa felt that understanding what constituted conventional academic discourses in a Business faculty presented difficulties.

She felt this was a particular challenge because she had not been given sufficient 'guidance' with her academic writing by her MRes supervisors (May 2011). In addition, she did not feel comfortable asking for help with her writing. Pippa experienced this challenge when she was asked to write a literature review for a coursework assignment. Below, Pippa discusses this literature review:

Yeah, the main, the main problem, one of the main challenge[s] I've found is with ... the literature review side of each of these proposals because I haven't been given any guidance by anybody since I've been here at all as to what literature I should be looking at? Where I'd find it? Any help at all on it....I don't know if it's deliberate because obviously you're supposed to find it yourself, but I was in a supervisor's meeting last week and they said to me, 'Oh, have you read Miles and Huberman then?' – have I ever heard of Miles and Huberman?' - trust me I now have both of their books. (Interview with Pippa, May 2011)

In the context of discussing her academic writing specifically within her MRes, Pippa explained she felt she was existing within 'a whole new culture' (March 2012) and that the writing she was being asked to do was different to the kinds of writing she had become accustomed to as a 'business woman' (March 2012). However, she also found the writing she had been required to carry out in her MRes as 'fascinating', despite initially receiving marks that she felt were low:

I had really bad shocks with the writing when I first started because on two of the assignments I got one at 45% and one at 46% and I'd never had marks like that in my entire life and that really shocked me, which was good because I got time to read them and understand them – how the academic world writes (An interview with Pippa, May 2011)

Pippa gives an example of an aspect of academic writing she feels she had had to learn. She explains that she feels academic writing has specific requirements related to explaining and justifying phenomena:

I think that's what I've learned most in doing the writing is that before I would say, 'that is a white window and it's closed' full-stop, but now I would have to say, 'and I think that it's white because of this that and the other and it's closed because of the

temperature, the temperature is', you know and I kind of like understand it better.

(An interview with Pippa, May 2011)

There was, however, one dimension of academic writing that she felt sure about. She explained that she felt it was important to not use the first person:

Well, in the business tradition and from the business school that we have here, it's not usual ever to use the first person, so all my writing that I have done [where] I am the researcher, or I am the author - I am never 'I' decided to do this or 'I went there' it would be the 'researcher went there or the author went there'. (Talk-and-text interview held with Pippa, May 2011)

Below, is a section from a critique Pippa wrote for a coursework assignment within her MRes at USE. In it, she is reviewing an article which was itself a report on research which had explored 'outside' perceptions of 'women on boards'. As the extract below illustrates Pippa writes in the third person, in an impersonal voice:

Looking now at the claims made, critical assessment of the findings from the research shows that no support is offered for the claim that their study provides a means of inspecting how female directors are viewed from outside their organisations and this is a claim which requires considerable evidence for it to be acceptable. No question was asked in the survey about females on the main board and it would seem to be difficult to establish this from a survey when the respondents could only rank items from 0-10, which does not give any space to elaborate or give additional detail on female presence at board level.

Female presence and its abilities to influence a main board would also seem to be more of a qualitative issue than quantitative. A survey and resultant models and tables is purely positivist and quantitative and gives no indication as to which, or any, female presence attributes may actually have on the board. Attributes regarding female mentoring junior colleagues in the business, having an ability to liaise with staff and business partners more easily and influencing the way in which products are tailored for women, may be better researched by interview rather than surveyed in order to gain a greater depth of understanding and the feelings of the women directors. In addition, the data on females on the boards was gathered at only one point in time, which gives a static picture and does not show if any changes took place. (An extract from Pippa's written text a Master in Research coursework essay, May 2011)

For this piece of coursework, Pippa had chosen to review an article which investigated 'women on boards' because it had a gendered dimension, a topic she found interesting because of her personal experiences as a woman in the 'business' world (personal correspondence with Pippa, 2012). Yet at the same time she feels she cannot write about this personal experience in the first person – because this is considered inappropriate in both the business and academic worlds (from her experience). It could be this very requirement to absent her personal voice that creates particular challenges for her in her writing.

Writing within Pippa's discipline and cultivating an academic voice which she felt was acceptable was therefore an ongoing challenge, specifically in relation to what she sees as her personal-professional voice and a newly developing academic voice. However, she did feel that her academic writing and research were immensely rewarding, full of future possibilities and pleasures. In May 2011, when she was specifically discussing her academic writing, she said: 'I love learning things and I love more knowledge. I've always read all the things I can lay my hands on'. Pippa's tale, then, generates questions regarding when, where and how conventional written discourses in Business faculties might be discussed with research students. In Pippa's case, there were also tensions present regarding when and where she felt it was appropriate to ask questions about the kinds of literature she should, or could be, engaging with in order to progress her research studies. This can be seen as connected to struggles around her emerging identity as a legitimate researcher, that is as one who has the right to ask for, or expect, help with her writing. Pippa's feelings related to the use of 'I' in her academic writing may also have caused tensions for her as a woman with a business background writing about business. This struggle around voice in relation to specific imagined addressees (the business world, the academic world) can be seen as an important dimension to her construction of voice in her coursework essay. Pippa's journey through postgraduate research writing in a Business faculty was not an easy one. To use Pippa's words, she felt it was a 'learning curve' and a context she felt she had to 'fight' to stay within. Despite this, she continued to pursue her studies and experienced a sense of fulfillment from doing so.

5.4 Ellie's Writing Tale: anxiety about sharing texts with supervisors (methodology chapter)

Ellie chose to pursue a full-time PhD at USE in the Wellbeing and Social Care school at USE after leaving a part-time, self-funded PhD in social work in a university which was an hour's commute away from her home. Initially, she completed a Master in Research (MRes) and then pursued a PhD. Ellie described the research she was carrying out as work which values a 'social model' for disability, a model that is widely used in health and social care studies which views disability, not as an individual challenge, but as a social concern. Specifically, she described her personal approach to research in disability studies as one which aligns with this social model currently prevalent in the field of health and social care and explains that she values shifts in perceptions around 'disability' from an 'individual tragedy' towards 'conceptualising disability as social oppression' (interview, March 2012).

Ellie and her family lived in a rural village several hours out of London: she and her husband had relocated to this area after working and travelling in Europe. Ellie felt that relocating to a rural area came with certain challenges which included living in an area where there was 'hardly any work at all' (March 2012). Below, she describes the challenges she had experienced at a local university before embarking on her funded, full-time research at USE (Ellie's commute from her home to USE was around four hours for a single trip):

I started actually funding a part-time PhD with [at Ellie's local university], but it was just too difficult doing it part-time - my teaching load at the college (I was teaching on a social work degree) was just so heavy, I mean even though I was only paid something ridiculous like two and a half hours a week, the actual work was more like ten hours a week, but it was all the other marking and ... it was just, it's just not enough money. (An interview with Ellie, February 2012)

During 2012 and 2013, Ellie was working on her own research study full-time at USE and had passed her probation review (see Appendix 7 for an extract from the probation review guidelines at USE). She had entered PhD studies on a full-time, funded basis. In early 2012, she was working on a methods chapter which she intended to be a part of her thesis PhD. Ellie's supervisors had made a several comments on her text and she experienced a range of feelings related to these different comments. Initially, she expressed some concern at discussing the draft of her methods chapter in an interview with me as researcher, because

she felt the comments her supervisors had made were potentially ‘damning’ (interview March, 2012). However, she also expressed that, as a researcher herself, the data – in this case the ‘written text’ – was more interesting in its raw state with her supervisors’ comments. Below, Ellie explains the feelings she has towards sharing her text:

J: can you tell me a little bit about anything, how you feel about the [text]? E:

Yeah, I think that, I kind of like, I understand I, I uhmed and ahed about sending this because it’s actually quite

J: private

E: well, not so much, it’s actually quite damning, you know the comments on them are a bit like [breathes in sharply] ... and you know, and then I thought, you know like well, you know as a researcher [?] myself [I can share] something a bit more interesting. (An Interview with Ellie, March 2012)

When discussing this particular academic text, an early draft of a methods chapter, Ellie began by describing her own writing as ‘polemical’ (March 2012). This term ‘polemical’ was also a term used by one of her supervisors, to describe a passage on the rough draft of Ellie’s methods chapter. Below, in an interview held in March 2012, Ellie explains:

E: Yeah well also it’s kind of like, it’s polemical. Well in a sense, the kind of like referencing stuff doesn’t really bother me because it’s

J: technical

E: It’s very much a draft ...and I do tend to kind of like write and then kind of like put the references in afterwards and things like ... challenging this [an idea], although it does actually go over the page and it’s, you know, it’s like - oh ok this is an historical argument, but I found it incredibly difficult to write, but what’s really interesting about this is that, there’s bits where, later on there’s a...quite a positive bit [positive comments made by a supervisor on Ellie’s written text] and when I was writing this first bit it was incredibly difficult. I haven’t, I’d kind of got out of the habit of academic writing. (An interview with Ellie, March 2012)

Ellie was working with many different kinds of feedback from her supervisors with regard to her methods chapter. For example, one comment made by her supervisor indicated that one of her ideas could be seen as an ‘historical argument’, while another comment warned that Ellie could be ‘setting herself up as the heroic researcher’ (see Appendix 8 for a full list

of the supervisors' comments). During the interview, Ellie seemed to be taking up this feedback in the sense that she was using supervisors' discourse about the different rhetorical moves she was developing within her own text. For example, she said of a part of her methods chapter: 'oh ok this is an historical argument' which was the same phrase a supervisor had used to discuss her writing. The extract which follows is a section of the written text which was discussed in the interview and had the supervisors' comments on it (on the right are comments from Ellie's supervisors which relate to this specific extract):

An extract from Ellie's written text <i>a draft of a methods chapter</i>	Comments from Ellie's supervisors about this section of her written text
<p>Other issues that arise from seeking informed <u>consent</u> identified by Crow, Wiles et al (2007) are that the paperwork acts as a barrier, disrupting the flow and making people lose interest. Further, they suggest the action of signing something can be intimidating for some individuals and data can be lost because people begin to tell their stories before the informed <u>consent</u> process starts. Finally, there is a suggestion that the actual process is patronising. These claims have some validity, but are not insurmountable. If the paperwork is integral to the process and follows closely on from informing participants about the nature of the research, it need not interrupt the flow and if the process comes across as patronising, then perhaps it is an attitudinal issue on behalf of the researcher. When seeking <u>consent</u> from people who do not have LD for a drug trial, the informed consent process is not considered patronising. Similarly, most people's lives are filled with form filling. If <u>consent</u> is genuinely an on-going process and the nature of informed <u>consent</u> has been clearly explained and there is no element of coercion, then the process need not be intimidating. If it is intimidating it perhaps suggests that <u>consent</u> is not fully informed. 'Losing' data because respondents begin to talk before the process starts is a weak argument not to engage with the informed <u>consent</u> process. If anything, it gives respondents a chance to clarify the narrative they want.</p>	<p>Comment 1 about the whole extract: I think these are all interesting points but I would take issue with these practices as a priori detrimental – yes they can 'feel' disruptive (to us – not sure about to research participants – evidence would be useful here) but if we are going to balance and check researcher power and have institutional safeguards these are always going to be necessary/or some creative solution – recorded verbal consent?? [sic]. Surely it is about when and how they are introduced – is the argument about how forms/consenting process are presented, explained, managed – coming back to my argument previously about ethics as 'relational' and on-going.</p> <p>Comment 2 about the 'last section' of this extract: This last section again feels a little on the polemical side. Ensure claims are evidenced and well-referenced.</p>

Ellie had complex feelings about having to show her working drafts to her supervisors:

That's something I find difficult, is - not difficult but challenging - it's like a whole new culture [Ellie is referring to writing within higher education], just like always having to show people [?] finished, you know not ... getting their feedback and it's like quite full-on and I find, I don't know about you, but I find that I don't often have

a space to talk about that, you know, how I deal with that, what it feels like, that I want more time, you know what I mean ... do you find you can talk about that with anyone? (An interview with Ellie, March 2012)

The supervisors' use of punctuation and directives (see Figure 14) draw attention to certain aspects of Ellie's writing (all comments are from the complete version of the written text discussed above). The directives, reinforced by the punctuation (!, ?, ??) indicate that Ellie needs to either be more cautious, check or strengthen what she has claimed with evidence:

- *You need to be much more circumspect in your arguments. Which ethical frameworks?'*
- *These are rhetorical statements which need?? [sic]embedding*
- *I would challenge that!*
- *References?*
- *You need to be much more circumspect in your arguments. Which ethical frameworks? Are they drawn entirely from medical ethics?*
- *Define 'bio-ethics' and critique Truman. Are ethics committees founded on such principles? Evidence?*
- *Ref?*

Figure 14: Examples of comments from Ellie's methods chapter

When a closer examination is taken of Ellie's written text, she can be seen to be working through an idea or concept: 'informed consent'. In one paragraph she refers to 'consent' seven different times (see the underlined terms in the extract Ellie's text above). In addition, when discussing her text, Ellie explained she would find it helpful to have some space and time to be able to discuss her writing— she explains she '[desires] more time' and 'space to talk ...'. Ellie's challenges also included making judgements about when it was best to include in-text references, explaining, for example that she does 'tend to kind of... put the references in afterwards'.

As a consequence, Ellie's written text could be read as one which expresses ideas which were very much in-process, or necessarily unfinished: a kind of cyclical text in which she is 'trying on' different ways coming to terms with, and representing an idea - 'informed consent'. It is not clear whether this was an explicit part of the discussion Ellie had with her

supervisors regarding this text, but it could be argued that this is an important purpose of the text.

Ellie's writing tale, then, can be seen on one level, through a lens of an ongoing conversation with her supervisors. These interactions with specific, real addresses were clearly having a role in the shaping of the voice in Ellie's crafting of her text. The supervisors took up their roles, at least in part, as providers of feedback, feedback which was aimed at contextualising Ellie's writing within the rhetoric of their discipline. However, they also offered specific comments pointing to the different kinds of arguments Ellie appeared to be making, signalling where greater support might be needed for these arguments. In one way, then, Ellie's writing tale can be seen as an illustration of the potential influence of specific relationships over the development of a postgraduate student's written texts. Ellie's tale also however foregrounds the challenges she had in cultivating a voice as a postgraduate writer while also engaging with the full range of her supervisors' feedback. Ellie clearly felt different kinds of tensions with regard to the 'taking up' of this feedback: she would have preferred, for example, to have had more 'time' and 'space' to talk about how one might 'deal' with the comments made by the supervisors.

5.5 Clara's Writing Tale: the pleasures and tensions of producing texts based on data (conference paper)

Clara was pursuing a PhD in a Business school – her area of interest was Communications in Business Meetings. Before applying for her PhD, Clara had been working in the public sector in the UK. She had already completed two Master Degrees; and, during her studies a tutor had recommended she pursue a PhD. The idea appealed to her even though she felt uneasy because this change would inevitably lead to a reduction in income.

During Clara's work as a manager in the public sector she noticed that other staff members were often quiet during meetings but would talk about their opinions, feelings and beliefs outside of meetings. 'The disparity between the formal setting and the informal setting was something that had caught [Clara's] eye' (interview, April 2012). Clara was to go on to make this interest the focus of her PhD at USE.

While pursuing her PhD at USE, Clara carried out her academic writing in a small house she had rented close to campus. She tended to work in monthly cycles – between supervisions

– where the first week was focussed on reading and thinking, and the latter half of the month on writing and preparing texts for the coming supervision (interview, April 2012). She had a ‘set pattern’ when writing in which she would log on to her computer every morning in a small room upstairs, and after reading her emails, would complete other administrative tasks. Once these had been completed, she moved on to editing the Word document, or written texts, she had been developing the night before. She had a table in her living area which had books and papers ‘strewn all over it’ (interview, April, 2012).

Clara was writing a conference paper which was to accompany her presentation. The paper was to accompany an abstract she had submitted to a conference. In the early stages of Clara developing this paper, she explained she had felt pressure to ‘take a position on the topic’, but had concerns about how little analyses she had completed. She also felt nervous about the fact that she was beginning to interact with experts in her field:

the thinking before what I want to say has hardly even started and yet I am trying to put together what my argument is (Clara’s writing journal, May 2013).

Clara also wrote that one of her challenges was that she felt she was experiencing limited access to her supervisors. In her writing journal, she expressed that she thought ‘there [was] a strong discourse of them [her supervisors] being busy’. During the initial stages of her writing, she explained that she believed she was ‘getting [the conference] presentation all wrong’ but decided she would give herself a few days to see if her feelings changed:

One of the problems is that I haven’t yet had any interaction with my supervisors – there is a strong discourse of them being busy so we schedule things in for supervisory meetings and next one is ages away (end May). I have a fear that I may be getting this paper presentation all wrong, but will see in [the] next few days how I feel. This is the first proper day of having to sit down and write the abstract and update the original proposal I sent in in Jan [sic]. (An extract from Clara’s writing journal, May 2013)

Clara had, however, gained some confidence from testing her ideas about her research in a Work in Progress Seminar session for research students at USE. In this session, she had presented her approach to data collection and analyses and received feedback on her newly collected data. In addition to this confidence, and despite her nervousness, she felt the process of writing ‘immensely enjoyable’. She enjoyed her academic writing because

she felt she was able to 'see all her data together' and 'sit and really think about what it [was] telling [her]' (May 2013).

As Clara got closer to crafting a more complete version of her proposal she reflected on challenges she had experienced regarding the length of the piece. She perceived the limitations related to length as problematic because the proposal needed to accommodate detailed 'ethnographic work':

I have had a bad few days of trying to work out how to construct this paper. It needs to be around eight thousand words and I've been wrestling with how I get an ethnographic piece of work into something that's worth saying in that length of piece. I haven't been able to make the data fit with the introduction. I have been trying to tell a bigger story than I can manage within the constraints of word length that I have. I have felt really irritated and frustrated with the whole PhD exercise in last couple of days and last night gave up, switched on TV and watched comedies instead. (An extract from Clara's writing journal, May 2013)

Clara gained confidence as she developed – what she perceived – as a more manageable approach to dealing with her research data. This shift allowed her to move on and write the piece:

This morning I'm back on track. I was reading in bed this morning and think I might have worked out a way to minimise the article by focusing on just one short fragment of data. I am looking forward to trying it out today, about to do that now. (An extract from Clara's writing journal, May 2013)

Clara then produced a more complete conference paper which was focused on this piece of data (see Appendix 9). Below, is a short extract from her proposal:

The study, regarding the future use of a high-profile urban greenspace site, is being delivered through collaboration between a university department, a local council and a strategic county council. (An extract from Clara's written text: A proposal for a conference panel, May 2013)

The above extract illustrates that Clara positions her research, more specifically, her data collection as a 'process'. For example, she uses the present continuous e.g. 'is being delivered through' to illustrate she is in the process of observing meetings which will

become her main source of data. Writing about her data, then, when it is not yet fully collected or analysed, is potentially very complex. On the one hand, she needs to be able to express ideas that are meaningful and appropriate to her audience, on the other, she needs to express that she is in the early stage of her research.

Clara's tale is significant in several ways. It demonstrates both the pleasures and the tensions postgraduate research writers can experience when they are forming identities as academic researchers and are seeking legitimate ways to position themselves amongst other academic researchers. For Clara, in this moment, this positioning constituted the crafting of an academic voice that would be considered appropriate for a conference paper. The process of crafting an appropriate academic voice for the text included Clara finding ways to write about data which had not been fully analysed; meeting a word limit and finding ways to narrow the scope of the presentation – in this case, she met the challenges by reducing the amount of data she had initially been planning to analyse. Clara also felt that she had limited access to her supervisors and that this presented some challenges. Clara's experiences can be seen to contrast with Ellie, for example, where it is clear that others were closely involved in the initial stage of the construction of her text.

5.6 Valerie's Writing Tale: the desire to publish texts (academic article)

Valerie was in the Education school pursuing a PhD in Public Science. She was also a mother and wife. Before marrying, Valerie had relocated to the UK as a teenager and had completed her A Levels. After this, she had been granted a place at an Oxbridge university to study Biology and Anthropology. Valerie had very clear ideas about how she wanted to carry out her PhD: for example, she began to publish academic articles early on in her research studies. This desire to publish early and be an active researcher and writer while pursuing her PhD, had its origins in challenges she had experienced while pursuing a research degree at a different university, many years prior. At that time, Valerie had 'felt totally disillusioned with academia' (interview, May 2013) and had gone on to take up a position as a researcher in a commercial corporation. The commercial firm employed her to engage in research and 'science writing' and to prepare documents for senior managers who wanted to be informed about 'health issues' (interview, May 2013). After several years

working for this company, Valerie branched out and became involved in health related regulatory, media and training work in professional and commercial contexts.

During her research studies at USE, Valerie commuted to the USE campus one to two days a week and wrote in her home – or at her local university's library. Valerie and her husband installed a small study in their garden and Valerie had a child-minder who assisted her family during the school week. Valerie kept a writing journal full of notes, images and diagrams which she treasured. In addition to these more private texts, she started writing articles for publications from the beginning of her PhD. She was interested in writing differently to the kind of science writing she had been engaged in, in her commercial research role. The specific article was based on Valerie's observations of a public-science event which was focussed on gaming.

When Valerie attended the public-science event she was reporting on for the article she was drafting, she had already established a positive working relationship with the organisers. The organisers had also made it clear they were interested in any potential publications that might come out of the event (interview, February 2013). This positive working relationship was to continue during the time Valerie was planning and writing the article she would go on to publish. For example, once Valerie had completed the article, she acknowledged the organisers and their input. Below, is an extract from her article in which she thanks the organisers of the event:

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank the organisers of [this public science event] for allowing me to observe this event and to write about it; and Dr Johannsson and Dr Clarence for comments on this manuscript. (An extract from Valerie's written text, an academic article written for a science and communication journal, July 2012)

Valerie discussed the significance of the organisers' input, including the fact they made important changes to her text so that aspects were factually correct, and that there was some degree of negotiation related to the scope of Valerie's article:

J: at the end I found the acknowledgments interesting you said, thanks to the people who allowed you to observe and then you thanked Dr Clarence.

V: I did ask have the guy from the Trust on there and he said, 'no take me off, I don't need to be on there'. I said, 'ok then whatever' because he gave me some useful feedback as well.

J: *I wanted to ask about that, what kind of feedback did you get from him roughly ...?*

V: *He made a couple of corrections which was useful because when you're observing something I'd made a couple of mistakes just in my observations ... because you don't want to hand in something that's incorrect, so I ... got that kind of clearance, ... the accuracy, and then it was just, he was asking questions, basically he was asking me to expand on certain things, and I ... just got back to him and said yeah, I appreciate you, you know it would be great to go into more detail, implications, and go into more detail on public engagement generally, but it's only three thousand words and maybe that can wait for a paper ... it was mostly, it was quite technical stuff saying, 'oh you might need to put that as a footnote as well or add this press release ... and just a couple of technical corrections (An interview with Valerie, July 2012).*

In addition to the organisers of the public-science event, Valerie actively developed relationships with the editorial committee for her target journal. Before writing the article, she emailed the editorial board with her ideas and received a positive response (February 2013). She then began to plan and write her text. Valerie described the journal as one which consisted of commentaries which were 'opinion pieces' – specifically, 'opinion pieces [which were] kind of smaller, briefer, you know, highlighting a certain topic or issue' (February 2013). These pieces were 'usually 1500 and 3000 words and not based on original research' (February 2013). This was different to the kinds of academic writing Valerie had previously engaged in, and had had exposure to, in her earlier professional and academic roles. She explained her intention for the article she was working on was to cultivate a more 'personal' feel in her writing (February 2013). This is evident, below, where in an extract from the opening passages of Valerie's article, where she discusses her personal interest in the topic and the kinds of observational, ethnographic methods she had drawn on to report on the public-science event.

Observations of the Hackfest

I asked if I could attend the [science festival] as an observer. I am currently exploring opportunities for public engagement, particularly the development of online citizen science studies and ‘scientific discovery’ games, as part of my doctoral research. My main aims while attending this event were to explore how scientists and games developers collaborated, whether there is a ‘trade-off’ between scientific accuracy and entertainment, and if scientific games can provide an opportunity to engage the wider public and promote dialogue. As an observer at this event, I was not directly involved in any of the deliberations or discussions relating to the development of the games. I did make field notes on how the groups worked together, what aspects of the development were key or problematic, and how the approaches differed between the groups and over the course of the [science festival]. I had brief discussions with the scientists concerning their views toward the public engagement of their work in general, and how games may fit into their wider engagement activities. I also had discussions with some of the developers to ask them about some of the challenges involved in developing a game based on actual scientific research. (An extract from Valerie's written text - an academic article written for a science and communications journal Note: A more complete version of Valerie's article can be seen in Appendix 10)

In her written texts, one can see that one of the strategies Valerie uses to cultivate this more ‘personal feel’ is the use of the first person (‘I’) (see, for example, ‘I asked if I could attend...’; ‘I am currently exploring...’; ‘I was not directly involved...’; ‘I did make field notes...’; ‘I had brief discussions...’, and ‘I also had discussions with...’). Although this shift in Valerie's writing style was not necessarily ‘conscious’ (see Valerie's comments below), it was a common-sense strategy in the sense that the purpose of this paragraph (in the context of the article) was to explain her role at the event and her intentions as a researcher, ‘My main aims while attending this event were to explore how scientists and games developers collaborated, whether there is a ‘trade-off’ between scientific accuracy and entertainment, and if scientific games can provide an opportunity to engage the wider public and promote dialogue’. Below Valerie explains her thoughts on cultivating this more ‘personal’ style in her writing and that she came to like ‘the approach’ even though she

initially found it challenging compared to what she had previously experienced as conventional academic writing:

I guess this is one of the things I try to get to grips with ... changing the voice and writing in a more personal way, and I think I quite like that, I mean it's different, and I found it quite hard but I quite like it now ... I think it's started to move over to that way of writing, so I wasn't really conscious of it ... because I was there, it had to be based on my own observations, so therefore I did, you know I used 'I' ... and I liked this approach. (An interview with Valerie, February 2013)

Valerie's tale is an example of the kinds of practices that can go on behind, or alongside, the construction of an academic text, and how these can be influential when a writer is cultivating voice in an academic article. For example, throughout the construction of Valerie's text, one can see other potential stakeholders were involved in both the idea and planning (the organisers of the conference who suggested she write something and her supervisor for suggesting a specific journal for the piece). Then, finally, Valerie also sought the feedback (or 'clearance') from the organisers on the 'accuracy' and 'technical stuff' (February 2013). Valerie's tale can also be seen as significant in terms of voice in that it demonstrates how her identity was shaped by her previous experiences as a researcher in both commercial and higher education contexts. These experiences enabled her to put to use a range of skills acquired within both these research contexts and contributed to her desire to write what might be considered less conventional professional texts at USE compared to the other kinds of research –related writing she had been accustomed to.

5.7 Jessica's Writing Tale: anxiety about writing a text requested by a senior academic and meeting expectations (discussion document)

Jessica was pursuing a PhD in the Psychology faculty at the University of Southern England (USE). Her specific area of research within her disciplinary context, Psychology and Education was developmental conditions, for example – attention deficit disorder – with UK secondary school students. Examples of written texts Jessica created in her first two years of research were a research poster, and a summary document of what Jessica refers to as the 'executive functions'. She gave this document the following title: *Thoughts on*

Developmental Aspects of Core Competencies in terms of Executive Functions: Definitions and Developmental Changes Throughout Childhood.

At the time Jessica wrote the 'executive functions' text, she was writing during the day, when she was alone and her two sons were at school and husband at work; she wrote in her living room at the coffee table, and usually completed some domestic tasks while she wrote, such as tidying, cooking and caring for her family's pet.

Although the 'executive functions' text's topic was connected to Jessica's PhD specialism, the text itself was not intended to be a part of her PhD thesis. An academic had asked Jessica to write the piece so that he could use it as a resource for policy-level work in which he was engaged for government. Jessica's comments below explain, in her words, how she saw this text fitting in with the larger study being managed by the senior academic: 'my bit is on what he calls core competencies'. Jessica explains below:

A senior academic in the department has asked me to come up with thoughts and ideas about how to structure and present the developmental trajectories of how thinking skills develop throughout childhood and adolescence. The study is part of a new Government initiative he's working on to present parents with guidelines on developmental progression in social and cognitive skills, together with ways of recognising developmental progress, and strategies to implement and support core skills. My bit is on what he calls core competencies which I take to mean the basic thinking processes I'm researching, as in inhibition, working memory and cognitive flexibility. (An extract from Jessica's writing journal, July 2012)

Jessica expressed some uncertainty about her role as a writer of this text while also being a postgraduate research student. For example, she questioned what it was that she could offer in this academic relationship: 'What on earth can I provide him?' (interview, February 2013). Jessica also felt challenges related to the writing of the piece because she had questions around 'what to cover' and the specific 'angle' she might take (August 2012). Below, Jessica describes what she called the 'creative paralysis' she experienced when first thinking about the piece and 'before beginning to read' the literature that eventually informed the text (Jessica's writing journal, August 2012). Not only did she experience challenges narrowing down the field, she also struggled with knowing how she might, or

might not, represent the concepts in the context of this specific text: 'Do executive functions actually exist or are they merely hypothetical constructs?':

I know I'm capable of creative paralysis before even beginning to read: Where to start? What to cover? What angle to adopt? Have I included the main themes? [Are there] contradictory research outcomes? [Who are the] key players in the field? [Are there] up-to-date assessments? Hence – a few jotted thoughts translates to a major lit review. I never know when enough is enough – even my main supervisor has told me I don't need to feel as if I need to know it all or cover everything – but the topic is just huge, very intangible, full of contradictory definitions and lack of task purity in the experimental studies which means replication rarely produces similar results which means researchers use ever more complex statistical techniques to make sense of their data. Do executive functions actually exist or are they merely hypothetical constructs? How to define them when traditional cognitive models are being thrown out in favour of contemporary neuroscience's emphasis on brain systems and processes? (An extract from Jessica's writing journal, August 2012)

In order to construct the text, Jessica drew on literature she had been exposed to previously in her university coursework. She found the process of sorting through what she described as the 'wheat from the chaff' when it came to selecting articles she saw as useful to the specific topic as complex (interview, February 2013). When she decided she needed to develop a format or structure for the written text, Jessica drew on different strategies she perceived as being helpful to the task at hand. First, she drew on her knowledge of the types of texts she had been exposed to in the Psychology literature, as well as specific texts she had engaged with in previous USE modules (Jessica's writing journal, August 2012). She eventually decided to structure the text as a series of questions and answers and this became a central, organising principle in her text:

I've decided the best way to get over the 'how to start' issue is to format the writing as a series of questions and answers on the development of thinking skills throughout childhood. My inspiration has come from thinking about how the university sometimes structure the opening introduction to chapters in the course modules as a series of questions to be answered. As the writing is very open ended

and generic, I've asked myself what I would like to know if I was a parent of a young child. I've grounded the opening example as an illustration of something I can relate to so that's made it do-able ... Now that I've got the opening bit grounded in an experience I can relate to, the rest seems easier. (An extract from Jessica's writing journal, August 2012)

An additional strategy Jessica developed and drew on for the text was to imagine a specific potential audience, so she asked herself 'what [she] would like to know if [she were] a parent of a young child' (Jessica's writing journal, August 2102). In this writing journal (August 2012) she also explained that she felt examples aimed at parents would 'ground' the 'executive functions' text she was constructing, implying that she felt the text's function would not be to solely inform academics.

The final text Jessica developed reflected the dimensions Jessica discussed in her interview and writing journals. A significant part of the text was structured around a series of questions and answers which had been written for the academics who engaged with these psychological notions, but also parents of young children. The text began with bullet points which introduce the overall structure of the document, and then this was followed by six macro questions which were designed to address the key areas of the 'executive function'. Jessica's text was organised around these key macro questions and the text consisted of a conclusion and reference list. Below is an extract from the text which illustrates the way in which Jessica included examples which were aimed at both parents and academics and organised the text around a series of six questions. The text shows one of her six questions and its answer:

1. What are the thinking processes that enable people to function effectively in everyday life?

The capacity to function effectively in everyday life has three fundamental aspects. First is the ability to hold information in mind, to mentally manipulate that information and to act on the basis of it. Second is the ability to act on the basis of choice rather than impulse, exercising self-control to respond in a manner that is appropriate and effective. Third is the ability to adapt behaviour quickly and flexibly to changing situations. These core skills; working memory, inhibition and cognitive flexibility are the foundations underpinning complex mental activities like planning, reasoning and problem solving (Davidson, Amso et al. 2006: p 2037).

Being able to ignore distractions allows the selection of an appropriate choice and to keep focused (sustain attention). Being able to resist a strong behavioural impulse helps make change to a better alternative possible rather than persisting in a less effective, habitual manner. The crucial role of inhibitory processes is to allow a delayed response within which more measured thinking processes can assess the situation and construct a response on the basis of flexible reasoning rather than 'knee-jerk' reaction. It also maintains social politeness, allowing a 'diplomatic' response to a friend's query, 'Do I look fat in this?'

The ability to hold and manipulate information in mind makes it possible to remember plans and instructions, relate one thing to another, including relating the present to the future and the past, and to act on the basis of information not perceptually present. Flexible thinking is critical in a changing world. It is essential for adaptability and for the creativity that comes from being able to see things in new or different ways (Davidson, Amso et al. 2006p: 2067). (An extract from Jessica's written text: *The Executive Functions*, August 2012]

In her writing journal (August 2012) Jessica takes time to reflect on the process of sending the 'executive functions' text to the more senior academic:

I never feel comfortable letting other people see my writing so it's been a relief that this academic won't want to see lots of work in progress with on-going suggestions and feedback. Time to send off the document - no hesitations, just press 'send'. Quick response from the academic - it seems the writing confirms his

thinking (why did I have to go through it then - just a test?). He wants to know if he can share it with a consultant on the study - who happens to be one of my external supervisors... Not getting paranoid here, but if I'd known it would be disseminated, thereby being taken more seriously than I'd assumed it would, would I have done it differently - or would I have been completely paralysed and unable to produce anything? (An extract from Jessica's writing journal, August 2012)

For Jessica, the feelings she experienced around the production of this text did not end once the text had been sent. While writing, and after sending the text, Jessica had legitimate questions around the representation of the concepts in the text. These included questions around the kind of coverage, in terms of the concepts which would be chosen to form the content of the text, that were expected from the academic. She also had questions regarding the people, or the audience/s, for whom the text was being written. Jessica dealt with these challenges by creating ways to imagine the form the text might take and the potential readers of the text. She did this by drawing on her own experiences as a student, academic and parent. Jessica's writing tale generates important questions about the conditions under which some postgraduate writers write: that is, under what circumstances, and with whom, do postgraduate research writers feel they are able to discuss their writing and ask specific questions that enable them to write confidently. Conversely, in what circumstances are postgraduate research writers expected to understand how to move forward with their academic writing independently of support and guidance from other academics? In Jessica's case, there were also writing-related tensions connected to the fact she was a mature student who had come to her postgraduate research studies later in life. There were times where Jessica felt she needed to convey a specific kind of identity as a research student and writer. In an interview with Jessica, she explains that she did feel she used 'language' and 'writing' to hide the 'mum' that was a part of her identity.

so language to me is a smoke screen ... because if you were to read a lot of my writing you would not see the person behind the writing at all, you wouldn't see mum, you would see a professional trying to get out (An interview with Jessica, March 2012)

However, significantly, in this writing tale she drew on her 'mother' identity to imagine a potential audience and make important decisions about the construction of the text.

Jessica's experience of crafting this academic text and cultivating a voice she felt would be appropriate for her potential addressees (both her supervisors and parents and carers) was complex and prompted conscious reflection on her part. The particular identifications Jessica brought to her text can be seen as gendered, in that she draws on her life-time of experiences of being a mother and carer, albeit in two distinct ways: she draws on her experience of being a mother and carer in imagining an addressee which in turn enables her to craft her text; she explicitly backgrounds her experience as a 'mum' in crafting the text in order to enable a 'professional' voice to come through.

5.8 Conclusion

Writing tales: crafting texts has highlighted the individual experiences of postgraduate research students producing texts through five writing tales. The chapter focussed on the issues each postgraduate writer faced, and the decisions they made, as they cultivated voices for specific written texts. These struggles can be usefully illustrated through the three dimensions outlined in 5.2 'Voice and the crafting of texts': *identity*, *potential addressees* and the *importance of specific occluded texts* to postgraduate writers.

The importance of *identity* as a dimension of voice for individual writers (who can you be? How can you say it? What can you say?) is evident across all five tales but brought into sharp relief in three of the tales. Pippa, for example, initially drew on her identity as a professional 'business woman' while writing texts for her MRes, and found both tensions and similarities between writing in these two domains – professional and academic. Practical decisions she made with regard to the crafting of a specific text were informed by her belief and experience that one should not use the first person in either context. As a postgraduate student, Pippa was also not sure where and when it was appropriate to ask for help with her writing. In this sense her identifications were a shaping force in terms of the development of the voice of her academic text, a coursework essay. For Clara and Valerie, the importance of identifications is evident in the ways they carefully considered how to position themselves in two different contexts. For example, Clara, who was a novice researcher constructing a conference paper, experienced tensions positioning herself amongst those more experienced in her field. These tensions concerned her desire to take

a position and craft an argument for her text, and the limitations of working with data that was newly collected, as the basis for that text. This in turn brought with it several key issues which included developing an approach to selecting data from a limited source and knowing when and where it was appropriate to ask for help from her supervisors. Valerie's tale too illustrates the importance of identity in developing a voice for her academic article. Valerie's background as a professional researcher in a commercial context and her experience of participating in a different PhD programme meant that she had clear goals for her USE PhD which included writing for journals from an early stage. Her previous researcher identities also informed choices she made about the crafting of her article, for example, she employed specific strategies to assist her which included corresponding with an editorial committee and other relevant academics. The effect of their contribution can be seen, textually, in the acknowledgments in her article presented in her tale above.

The dimension of *potential addressees* (that is both actual and imagined audiences/readers) is also a significant dimension of the cultivation of voice in academic writing for postgraduate students. Pippa's tale, for example, highlights the challenges she experienced with conventional writing practices in her discipline 'Business and Management'. These challenges are connected to her sense of the potential audiences for her text in that she struggled to understand the expectations and needs of both her supervisors and her discipline with regard to academic writing. Contributing to these tensions was the fact that she felt it was not appropriate to ask her supervisors questions about the literature she should be drawing on for her writing. In turn, these *addressee*-related tensions may have adversely affected her engaging fully with her personal experience as a professional in her academic writing. Similarly, Jessica's considerations of addressees affected the kind of text she felt it was appropriate to construct. Even though Jessica imagined a potential audience which consisted of both academics and parents/carers for her discussion document, she felt it was important to foreground a professional academic voice. Jessica's conscious reflections on potential and 'appropriate' voice affected micro details and decisions shaping the text (for example, choosing to structure her text as a Question and Answer document to respond to typical questions both parents and academics would benefit from).

Finally, Ellie and Jessica's tales in Chapter 5 point to the significance of occluded texts (or less institutionally visible texts) for postgraduate writers in their development of voice in academic writing. Ellie's text, which can be considered as an exploratory written text – in the sense that she was exploring an idea related to her topic of 'informed consent' – was an extract from an early thesis draft chapter on which she received a range of feedback from her supervisors. To Ellie, this specific text was significant, in that she expressed a desire to consider the text as an exploratory space in which she could refine her ideas about 'informed consent'. In terms of Ellie's developing voice as an academic writer, working within a more occluded textual space enabled her to 'try out' these ideas, no doubt with the intention of then going on to construct a more visible (or institutionally acceptable) methods chapter. These desires point to the fact that this text was an important space for Ellie to practice and cultivate her academic voice. Jessica's text 'a discussion document' was also an occluded text in that it was a document requested by an academic colleague and not directly connected to assessments within her own postgraduate studies. By working within a more occluded textual space, Jessica was able to draw on her personal, lived experience as a mother, as well as her newly developing knowledge as an academic to explore how a text might be constructed that potentially meets the needs of academics and parents.

I will now turn to a presentation of writing tales in Chapter 6 which focuses in more detail on the struggles postgraduate researchers experienced with regards to their academic writing practices across longer periods of time and in different spaces.

6 Writing tales: struggles around writing

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 some of the struggles postgraduate students face around text production and the understanding of conventions were highlighted. The aim of this chapter is to focus more centrally on struggles related to the postgraduates' research studies and academic writing. This chapter connects strongly with the second and third research questions which focus on the perspectives of postgraduate students about their writing and the gendered nature of academic writing as a postgraduate student (see 3.2 for discussion).

In this chapter, *struggle* specifically refers to the difficulties and challenges participants experienced as academic writers, and is a key theme that emerged as significant across all participants' accounts. I illustrate these struggles through five *writing struggle tales*, drawing together data that foreground different perspectives and experiences that participants felt were meaningful to them. These experiences were sometimes memories and, at other times, reflections on lived experiences that they felt shaped their experience of writing. To do this, the tales have been crafted so that they accommodate memories and reflections, which include for example, memories of a participant's parent's comments on what constitutes 'valuable work'. These memories and reflections are set alongside more recent experiences of writing. These five tales have been selected because they foreground struggles articulated across the data-set

In order to discuss the struggles in the context of lived experience, in 6.2, I first reiterate relevant points from Ivanič's model of identity, in particular the concept of the autobiographical self/voice. Connections are also made with Barton and Hamilton's (1988) notions of *role* and *network*. Sections 6.3 to 6.7 then present five writing struggle tales. The chapter ends with a conclusion which draws together the key themes illuminated by the struggle tales.

6.2 Voice, roles and networks

In recounting and discussing the struggles they faced in their research writing, participants often referred to memories and reflections that were meaningful to them, which seem to assist them in describing the lived experience of writing. They are examples of what Ivanič calls the 'autobiographical self', that is 'the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped --- by their prior social and discursal history' (Ivanič 1998, p.24). Ivanič's attention to the importance of the autobiographical self signals that even though memories and experiences may not be 'close' in time or space to a specific act of writing, they can be highly influential and therefore research focusing on these can provide; a) valuable insights into feelings related to academic writing practices; and b) insights into the kind of voice work that is done as a text is crafted. As a consequence, memories and reflections figure prominently in the tales in this chapter (see also Chapter 2 on the importance of voice).

In exploring the struggles that postgraduate writers face it is also useful to draw on two other concepts, widely used in literacy research: *roles* and *networks*. In their longitudinal study of everyday literacy practices, Barton and Hamilton (1998, p. 61-64) use the terms to illustrate how individuals foreground the ways in which people's sense of identity is anchored to their social roles and networks. *Network* is a concept which has been taken up to illustrate how the kinds of relationships people have, for example, within a family or institutional group, can have an impact on the different *roles* they take up at any one time. Barton and Hamilton point out that a 'network can ... involve coercion and exclusion, and can be normative and controlling. Network, like community [they argue] is a cosy and beguiling word but closely structured local social relations can also be oppressive, disruptive or resistant to individuals' needs for change' (p. 62). Here, Barton and Hamilton are signalling that networks are not always necessarily positive and supportive of individual's desires and personal ambitions. This chapter takes up the idea that when individuals seek to transform or develop new *roles* within existing *networks* (or relationships), this can involve struggles related to their identities which are significant for them as postgraduate researchers and writers.

6.3 Alison: 'Get your nose out of the book and get up and do something'

Alison was a teacher at a local Further Education college, which is a 10-minute drive away from her home. During her time at USE, she was pursuing a doctorate in education, which was focussed on computing in Education (the subject in which she lectured). She lived with her husband and three teenaged boys and worked consistently at carving out time to write in and around her 30 hours of employment at the college and the domestic responsibilities she had in her home (the significance of *place* and *space* to academic writing practices are discussed in more detail in the writing space tales in Chapter 7 of this thesis). Below, Alison discusses where and how she carried out her research writing while pursuing her research degree:

I am always juggling things, I like to write in the kitchen, it is comfortable, I can cook and keep a check of everything as I am working, it is my favourite room of the house and I enjoy writing at the kitchen table. I have managed to be able to block out all noise and concentrate on my laptop and work. I also write during my

contracted hours at the FE college, I have a small desk in a staff room. I really don't like writing there as it is too busy with lots of people disturbing me, it is supposed to be a workroom, but I question that...Consequently I take myself off to the silent room in the library but it is not comfortable as no drinks or snacks can be taken in and I like to have a cup of tea when I am writing....When I have the opportunity I like to get up at 6am and work for 1hr-[1 and a half]hrs [sic] before the rest of the family gets up. I also write in the evening after cooking the tea and when everyone has settled in for the night after their various activities and while they are doing homework. (An extract from Alison's writing journal, August 2011)

Alison felt she always had to 'juggl[e] things' to carry out her academic writing. This included occasionally allowing herself to abandon her 'chores' and for her 'writing [to] take over' (August, 2011). In contrast, there were 'other times [when her] chores [took] over', sometimes compromising her desire to 'keep to [her] deadlines'. This balancing act is representative of the types of struggles present for Alison as a postgraduate writer – many of them centred on competing priorities – all of which were important dimensions of her life

Alison's struggles with writing did not just relate to finding times and places in which to write as a busy adult; as a young woman who loved to read and write, she sometimes didn't feel supported by the family network in which she was brought up. For example, Alison recalls, when she was a young girl, her mother telling her to be more helpful in the house, and less preoccupied with intellectual work like reading. She told her:

to get [her] nose out of the book and get up and do something....[Alison's mother] wanted the housework to be done and that was her priority - to clean (interview, June 2011).

There were also times when Alison felt people gave her the impression others were more capable of carrying out intellectual work. For example, she recalls a lecturer in her undergraduate studies making accusations about her writing – claiming the written text she had submitted could not 'possibly' be her work (interview, June 2011). Alison expressed that she found the idea that someone would not expect her to write well a challenging one (June 2011). Despite these struggles, Alison never gave up on her writing or having her

‘nose in a book’. She found ways to carry out the day-to-day responsibilities which included being a carer and provider in her family. Alongside these responsibilities, she actively carved out time and space to write for her doctorate. Alison’s memories of her intellectual pursuits being discouraged are significant in this context because they highlight the fact that she continued to write, despite there being times where she had felt others had not fully supported these pursuits.

6.4 Pippa: ‘Fifty-four and I went to university and I got my degree – got a first’

Throughout Pippa’s life as a working mother of two children she found it increasingly difficult to find jobs that paid her well and challenged her. This was particularly the case after her divorce when, as the sole carer of two young children, she could no longer easily travel for work (interview, May 2011). Below, in the context of Pippa discussing her postgraduate writing practices, Pippa explains how she could find work, but after quickly learning a role, it no longer ‘interested’ her:

With all job[s] that I [took] within 6 months I [knew] how to do it inside out, back-to-front, upside down and I can tell you how to do it faster, neater [...] and of course I was never high enough to be able to tell anybody how to do it. (Interview, May 2011)

Pippa felt frustrated at not being challenged in the jobs she was able to take on as a working mother. These frustrations were related to never being in a position ‘high enough’ to be in management – or to engage in intellectually stimulating work - which led her to university, where she completed a bachelor degree as a mature student:

So when the children were grown up and they’d left home and ... were settled, I decided that I couldn’t carry on ... just going to hopeless jobs just to pay the mortgage to live in a house on my own, and so after several nights of difficulty, I decided to sell the house, so that I’d have enough money to go to university – so I was fifty-four and I went to university and I got my degree – got a first. (Interview with Pippa, May 2011)

Deciding to embark on a university career at the age of 54 (once her children were adults, and had children of their own) came with challenges. A significant source of anxiety related

to pursuing a tertiary education was financial, and these difficulties continued once Pippa had acquired an undergraduate degree. Pippa had to find ways to fund her studies, as well as find graduate level work that stimulated her intellectually (interview, May 2011). Eventually, Pippa felt she was left with a degree, but without the means to support herself which, in turn, led her to consider pursuing a research qualification:

so I thought well, what else would I really want to do and I thought I'd really like to be in the academic world because I love learning things and I love more knowledge and I've always read all the things I can lay my hands on. (Interview with Pippa, May 2011)

Pippa's journey through university and into research was not always straightforward. Much to Pippa's disappointment, after completing a Master in Research, she was not offered a position as a funded research student at USE, and found herself needing to apply to other universities. These application processes required compiling different kinds of written texts for different audiences. Below is an extract from one of Pippa's more occluded written texts, an application to an alternative university to continue the research she had started at USE within a Master in Research. In addition to a detailed research proposal, her application to a university included a workplan she had written, which provided details of her planned progression through a PhD (see also Swales 1996 in which he outlines the occluded, yet significant nature of texts like Pippa's, which are written as part of applications to gain access to universities). Below, is an extract from Pippa's *workplan*:

WORKPLAN:January – March 2014

Deep analysis of the transcribed interviews will commence. The researcher will ensure at the initial meetings that all interviewees are happy for her to contact them again, if there are any parts of their interview which are found to be not clear or easy to misunderstand.

...

October – December 2014

Continuation of writing up the thesis, as well as possible changes to the literature review will take place at this time. Discussion with supervisors as to the possibility of writing journal articles based on the PhD thesis and attendance at future seminars.

...

April - September 2015

Viva practice and printing off of the thesis will take place. Hopefully by now a job at the University might be offered to the researcher, who wants to remain at University of Northampton. Viva will be scheduled and undertaken. (Extracts from Pippa's written text, November 2013)

The tensions and desires Pippa experienced during her postgraduate research, are particularly vivid in her plan (see above) for the 'April – September 2015' period where she clearly states her ambition to have a paid position at the university at the end of her PhD: 'Hopefully by now a job at the University might be offered to the researcher, who wants to remain at University of Northampton'. Pippa's desire to have qualifications and work which offered her financial security and intellectual stimulation are clear throughout her discussions and reflections. It is important to note that Pippa's journey to achieve these objectives was not an easy one. She pursued her studies while facing a series of complex challenges. In addition to working hard to find ways to finance her studies, Pippa was not accepted for a funded place as a PhD student at the university in which she acquired her MRes. Throughout her life, she also felt that employers had overlooked, and underpaid her. She felt that this was because of her unique position as a mature graduate. Despite these challenges, Pippa saw her research studies as a way of bringing about change for herself – a way of inhabiting an alternative intellectual, professional and personal existence – one that had the potential to be more rewarding and stimulating.

6.5 Catherine: On women who ‘speak about academic / serious topic[s]’

It's such a big deal - the end product - it has to be such a high standard...it's easier to write some emails or organise something or do something different or practical, which is a hard thing, so I am trying to change that. (Interview with Catherine, September 2013)

Catherine, a single mother of two small children, had worked in a bank prior to pursuing a PhD at USE. She had enjoyed this work in the financial sector where her role was to review documentation related to the finances of small businesses (September 2013). Her decision to leave the position and acquire funding to pursue a research degree was primarily an ‘economic’ one, in the sense that she felt PhD funding would allow her to continue a career (through her research) while being mother to her two small children. Catherine experienced several challenges taking time out from her role in the bank to pursue research which included placing her children in a nursery she was not completely happy with:

C: You always want to do your best for your children, don't you? [speaking quietly] The nursery isn't the best but ...I just think in the long run it is the best.

[Catherine begins to cry softly]

J: It's so hard isn't it, because, I know for me it's like, I know she misses out [J is referring to her daughter being in a full-time nursery] like you say you know she misses out on a lot, like you say for the long run it's the best and it gives us something, which in turn gives them something.

C: I think so but I think, I could put that on hold, definitely, it's very intellectually stimulating, I enjoy doing the research, it's nice meeting people, having these conversations and things like that, but I wouldn't mind not having them for a period. You can always do it later. It's an economic decision. (Interview with Catherine, September 2013)

For Catherine, many of the struggles she experienced during her postgraduate qualification can be seen in her attempts to stay engaged with her career trajectory, while also caring for her children. Below, she explains why this is important to her:

I think if you stay with your children for say five years ... it can be a complete career break, [and] it is very difficult to pick up afterwards and it's expensive. You need to find a way of financing that break and you don't always have opportunities straight away, so now is an opportunity for me to do this and I have to take it [Catherine is referring to pursuing her funded PhD]. (Interview with Catherine, September 2013)

Catherine's response points to some of the main struggles for her as a postgraduate writer of research –that of balancing the roles of mother and postgraduate research student, a balance she feels she must strike or risk difficulties re-engaging with her career at a later stage. As a part of her efforts to manage this re-organisation of her life she chose to write during office hours at university while her children were at the university nursery and to undertake house work in the evenings. Doing research writing in the office though, was not without tensions:

I always write in the office. I get very distracted with other people ... in the past, occasionally I've written a little bit at home when the children are sleeping but it's generally not very good because I'm too tired for this [talking very quietly]. The reading, the reading sometimes I do in the evenings. ... I really feel like if I didn't have the children, god it would be so much easier, it would be so much easier, you could [have] so much more focusI think the writing and thinking about it, if you can be flexible with your time, makes it so much easier, and when you start getting into it and just keep going until you're really tired(Interview with Catherine, September 2013)

Above it can be seen that Catherine feels restricted regarding when and where she can carry out her postgraduate reading and writing – writing in the evening, for example, was often difficult because she was 'too tired' - this is, at least in part, because she is a mother of two young children. Her statement regarding the impact of her small family on her writing practices is unequivocal: 'I really feel like if I didn't have the children, god it would be so much easier'.

Catherine's struggles with being a researcher and postgraduate academic writer were not just related to managing a young family by herself; she also spoke of childhood memories of representations of women who 'speak about academic/serious topic[s]'. Specifically, she remembered feeling that 'serious [or] academic women [were] whimpish[sic] or limited' (Catherine's writing journal, July 2012 – for a more detailed extract see below). Catherine made connections between her research-focussed writing and these childhood beliefs, explaining that she felt her 'general confidence might be lower' as well as 'the propensity to self-depreciation'. Below, Catherine expresses her feelings about her academic writing in a writing journal entry. Her words reflect some struggles related to the quality of her own writing: 'anxious, slow, not enough, more minor point[s] not very well expressed, repetitive phrases and words at times etc.' Below, she reflects, more fully, on the possible significance of gender to her experience of academic writing:

generally, I felt girls were whimpish[sic] and limited; I also remember observing in myself as a teenager the differential reaction to watching men and women speak about an academic / serious topic – I automatically dismissed the woman's contribution because of her gender (linked to incompetence etc.) rather than content of what she was saying and was quite disturbed by that observation. (An extract from Catherine's writing journal, July 2012)

Catherine experienced two kinds of struggles related to her academic writing during her research degree. On the one hand, she experienced every-day, practical tensions during her research-focussed writing related to being a single mother who was supporting young children while also building and maintaining a career, of which her research was a key part. Second, when discussing her academic writing practices, and while she was writing academically, she foregrounded potential relationships between her past conceptions of 'serious' or 'academic' women being 'whimpish' or 'limited' and her feelings about writing. However, despite these struggles – or tensions, Catherine continued to prioritise her research focussed writing and continue to make progress with her research. She saw the financial and career security and benefits which would result from her writing and studies to outweigh the difficulties she was experiencing as a single mother and carer of two small children

6.6 Jessica: 'I always knew I was capable of doing more'

Jessica was pursuing a postgraduate research degree in psychology while also being a wife and mother to teenaged boys. After coming to her undergraduate and postgraduate psychology studies later in life, she had initiated a large study for her PhD on developmental conditions in children who were attending secondary schools in the UK.

For Jessica writing and studying as a separate activity to family life sometimes felt like a struggle. For example, there was a moment where her son expressed concern that her postgraduate reading and writing (or 'work') takes 'mum away' from the family. Below, Jessica is reflecting on her son's discomfort with her writing and research:

He said mum you're always working, you never stop, and you should be doing other things. But I was enjoying what I was doing, then again, the tension came in there, do I stop because the family wants me to be mum or do I carry on what I'm really enjoying what I'm doing for myself? I'm afraid I carried on what I enjoyed doing.
(Interview with Jessica, March 2012)

As a mature student and mother, Jessica also struggled with 'her own image' of how others perceived her suitability to take on a role as a researcher or scientist who had taken up her postgraduate research studies later in life. This struggle was complex, however, because she also felt positively about the writing aspect of being a research student: she felt it enabled her to express 'honesty' and 'integrity':

I feel like I've got no part in trying to turn the clock back and be somebody twenty years younger. I feel that should be their domain, the youngsters with a whole life-time ahead of them and I think well maybe when I've done this that will be it because I can't see me competing in the market place with young researchers in their twenties ... and this is where the writing actually becomes very important because it's gender free and it's age free. Nobody reading that could say what age or sex is the person who wrote it, so I have to get over this mental image of me as a pension grabbing mum almost, to an objective academic whose writing speaks for itself ... the writing is the core of who I am ... take away everything else, mother, fifty-five year-old middle-aged woman living in the country-side, loves taking the

dog for a walk ... who I actually am in terms of integrity and honesty. That comes out in my writing. (Interview with Jessica, February 2013)

Academic writing, then, provided Jessica with intellectual affordances. It gave her the privacy she needed to freely inhabit the researcher/scientist persona and to enter a new life, rich with intellectual curiosity. Jessica's statement that writing is the 'core' of her is also a powerful one, indicating that it plays a central role in the ways that she sees herself, or the manner in which she identifies as an individual, regardless of the way in which others might perceive her.

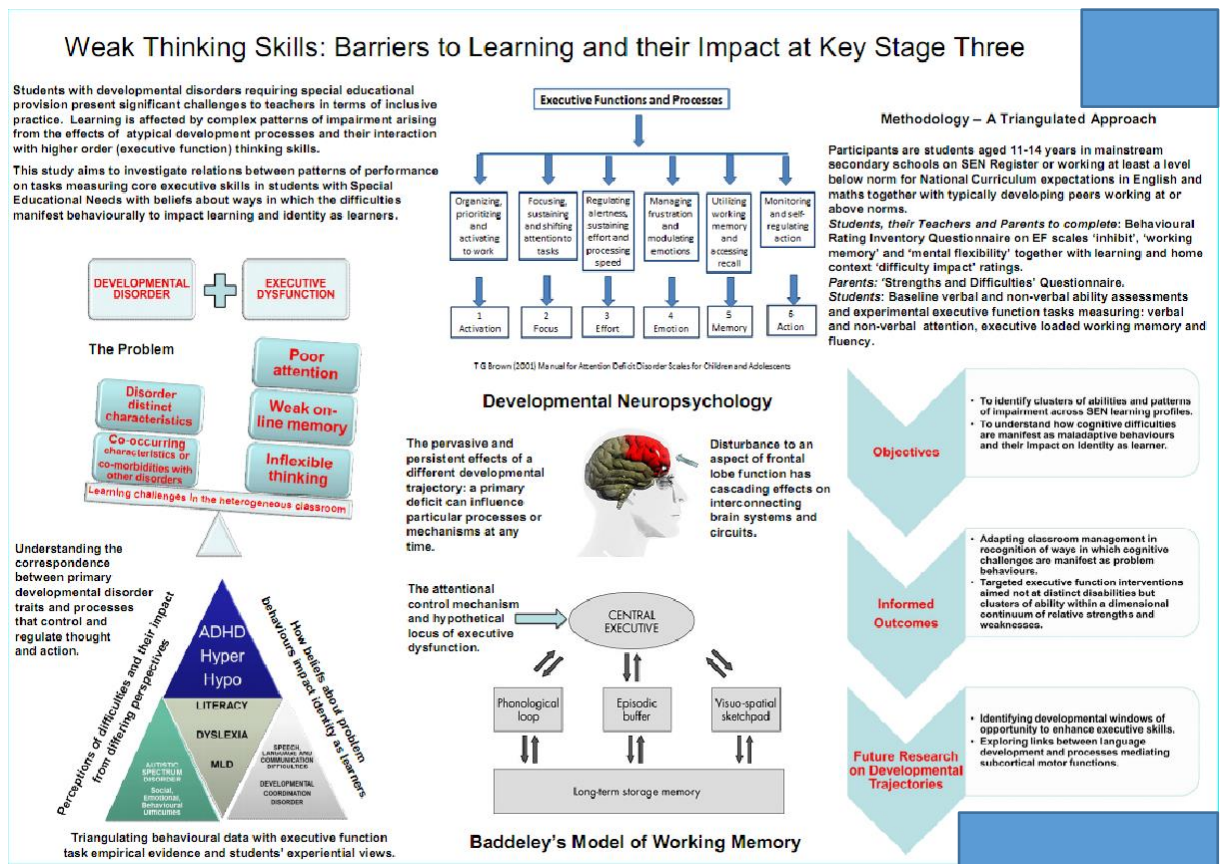
There was a key memory that was significant to Jessica in terms of her academic writing practices which was related to her father and his opinions about her as someone who could have her own ideas:

Jessica remembered a moment that occurred in her life when she was about eight, sitting at the dinner table with her father, whom she said was 'very Victorian' – she said that she would never forget what he had said at this specific moment, 'No one could possibly be interested in anything you have to say'. (Field notes from Jessica's interview, March 2012)

Jessica believed her father's claim that others would not be 'interested' in her 'ideas' also affected an approach she cultivated to her own academic writing – one which was focussed on the development of a writing style designed to defend criticisms and ensure she was not 'caught-out':

Indirectly – [it] all goes back to never being good enough in my father's eyes so I feel I have to leave no stone unturned and have a full, in-depth understanding of everything with all angles covered so that I can't be caught out. Problem for my writing is that it can be unfocussed and full of unnecessary detail. (An extract from Jessica's writing journal, August 2012)

Below, is a research poster developed by Jessica in which one can see the importance of a specific kind of detail to Jessica:



(An extract from Jessica's written text, March 2012)

Jessica's research poster illustrates that she was investigating a range of factors including, 'Relations between patterns of performance on tasks measuring core executive skills in students with SEN [Special Educational Needs] and ... beliefs about ways difficulties manifest behaviourally to impact learning and identity'. The manner in which she attends to detail reflects a consistent interest in expressing causal relationships. In addition to the sentences on the poster, this interest is illustrated by her use of six different types of diagrammatic representations – each expressing causal relationships. Similarly, there two very long sentences in the poster, each sentence containing multiple sub-clauses. For example, consider the second sentence on the left in her poster: 'This study aims to investigate relations between patterns of performance on tasks measuring core executive skills in students with Special Educational Needs with beliefs about ways in which the difficulties manifest behaviourally to impact learning and identity as learners'. This sentence reflects her careful attention to: detail, measurement (or outlining methodological parameters) and the representation of causal relationships.

Despite the meticulous attention Jessica gave her academic writing, she still felt there were social and cultural stereotypes connected to science which created tensions for her as a woman who wrote about science. For example, she felt that as a student conducting research which adopts clinical methodologies, the 'skills' she had developed and drew on for her work were ones she felt 'men are supposed to be better at' (interview, August 2012). Similarly, as a postgraduate writer and a 'mum' she also expressed that she felt at times like an 'imposter' in the academic world. However, despite these concerns, Jessica felt science was her 'home' – she explained, 'I know I feel at home grappling with the science, the challenge is just perfect for me'.

Jessica felt her writing freed her to inhabit a 'scientific' persona. Her reflections on perceptions of herself as a scientist and writer also provide glimpses into the tensions some postgraduate writers experience as early-career academics and writers of research. That is, there are expectations which exist around what it means to be an academic writer and researcher, and these can be understood as gendered, not only in terms of whom individuals believe 'belongs' in academia, but also the kinds of writing practices which are held in high esteem within higher education. In Jessica's case, she wrote in a very particular way (in her research poster, for example, she was expressing detailed causal relationships) and her writing was an important part of forging a specific academic/researcher identity.

6.7 Cosima: 'I would like to be able to show the children that...I can also do this kind of work, and it's interesting, that it's doable, that mummies can also do it too'

Cosima was a mother and part-time teacher who enjoyed research, writing and teaching. For the formative years of her postgraduate research studies she lived in Italy and then England. Cosima was the full-time carer of her family's domestic life while her husband was a full-time academic who worked at universities during the working weeks. Cosima had experienced tensions in professional settings around her desire to express her ideas and she shared these tensions when she was discussing her postgraduate academic writing practices. For example, Cosima had been teaching a course on research methodologies to a group of undergraduate students in Italy (interview, May 2011). In the tutorial she was teaching the students about: 'methodologies' and 'tools for historians that can be found

online' (interview, May 2011). During the tutorial, the students had started to talk about writing and Cosima recalled exclaiming ... 'I have to tell you a few things about the conclusion'. When she had finished talking to the students, 'a professor who was in the room interjected and stated '... you are not allowed to write any conclusions because you're just undergraduate students - you're not supposed to draw any conclusions from anything. Just report' (interview, July 2011)⁵. While there are, no doubt, cultural expectations regarding the kinds of circumstances in which an academic writer might be seen to be appropriately 'drawing conclusions', the professor was challenging – and undermining – Cosima's (the teacher's) suggestion that the students may need to write their own conclusions. This event was significant to Cosima because it represented the kinds of attitudes she felt she had encountered, and had had to negotiate with regard to her own academic writing. She felt that she had to struggle against an attitude, expressed by some in the contexts in which she taught, that students who were in higher education were not considered to be intellectually mature enough to write conclusions. Cosima also struggled with this as a postgraduate student where she felt she needed to be writing conclusions.

Using English as an additional language, writing in a family setting, and coping with a range of competing priorities, presented very specific cluster of struggles for Cosima. For example, she expressed that she felt like 'someone who [was] from a different world' when writing in English and that, because she was writing in a second language, she felt it was particularly important to 'let the piece of writing rest for a little bit'. In other words, she felt that, in an ideal world, she would have time to set her writing aside for some time before revisiting and editing it again.

There was another dimension of writing as a postgraduate researcher which Cosima felt was important. The extract below, foregrounds the fact that Cosima wanted to be considered, by her children, in the same way her husband is, a 'researcher':

There is one thing that I actually thought about a few times because, and I know it sounds a bit silly, but it's what I really thought. Because my husband works in research,... he tells the kids that he's a scientist, which is true, he is a scientist and,

⁵ For a transcript of this interview, see Appendix 3.

in a way, I would also like to be able to show the kids that I can also do the same things, not in the same fields but that, you know, doing research and teaching. I love teaching, he doesn't care - but I love teaching, especially at university level.... It's not something that, you know, Daddy does and I'm at home ...so I know it's a little bit silly, but I really, you know, one of the reasons why I really want to do this is that I would like to - I would like to be able to show the children that, you know, that I can also do this kind of work, and it's interesting, that it's doable, that mummies can also do it too. (An Interview with Cosima, July 2011)

The above extract illustrates that the reasons Cosima writes for a postgraduate qualification are multi-layered: it is often not just the pursuit of the qualification that is important, but also what this might represent socially (for example, it might represent status and respect in one's family). Although Cosima glosses her own desires as 'silly', it was clearly important to her to model to her children that she was not only capable of engaging in intellectual work, but that carrying out the work of a parent and an academic is possible – or 'doable' - in a day-to-day sense. In this way, Cosima was seeking to create a legacy for her children.

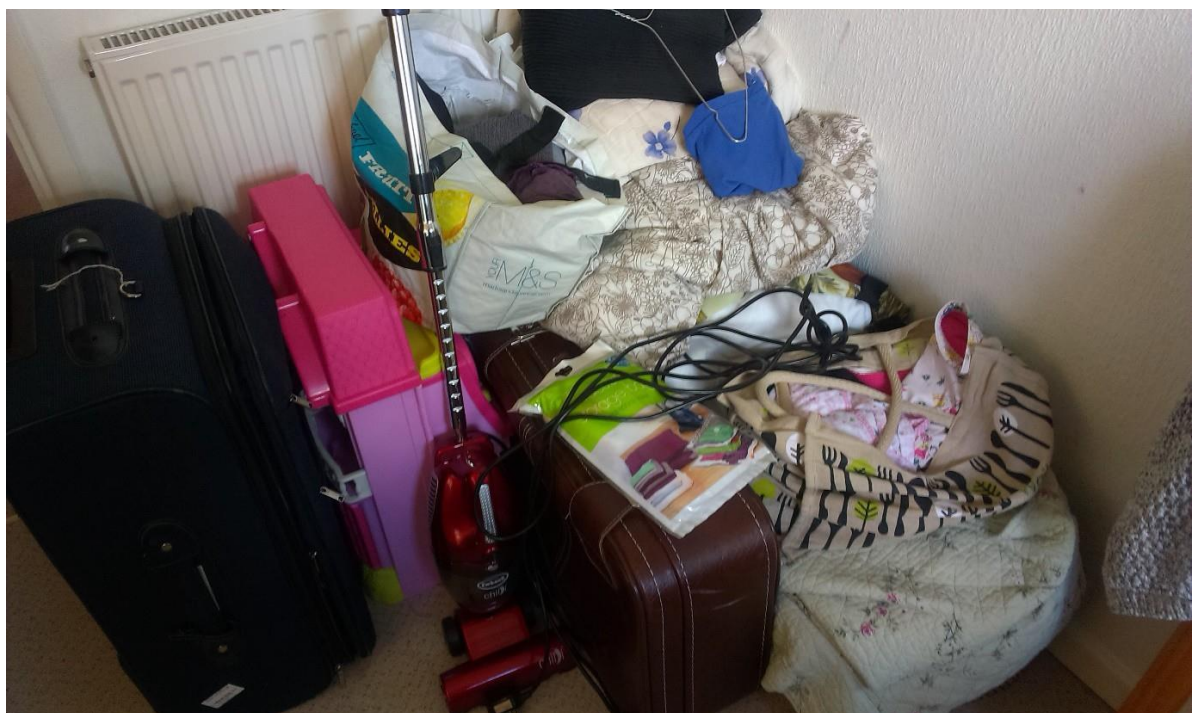
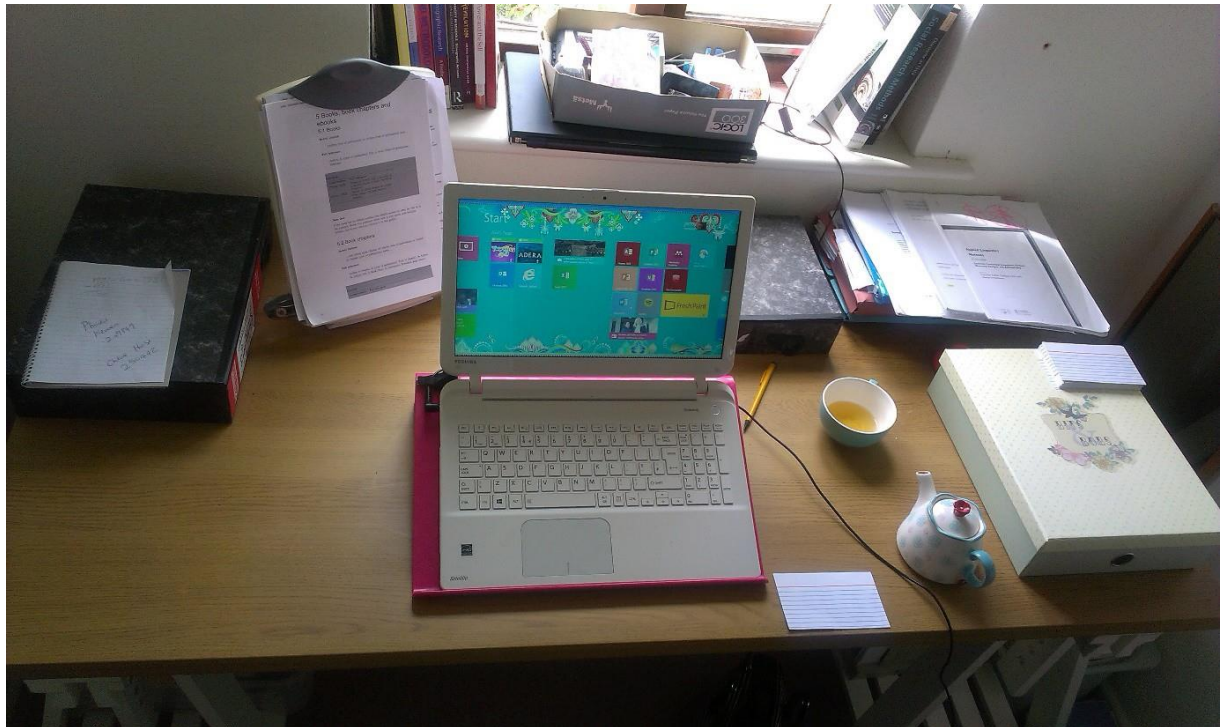
Cosima's struggles, which include a desire for her to be seen as a legitimate writer and researcher within science - and knowing when and where it is appropriate to 'draw conclusions' - are woven through several of her experiences of academic writing: for example, she was challenged by a senior academic for teaching undergraduate students how to write conclusions, and, through her postgraduate research experiences, she strove to be 'seen' as a mother and an academic. In terms of writing in English, an additional language for Cosima, she was aware of a desire to create spaces for her writing to 'rest', but also found that these were rarely available. Cosima's challenges, like the other participants in this chapter, did not become insurmountable obstacles, she continually carved out times and spaces in which to write and develop her research.

6.8 Conclusion

Chapter 6 has explored the struggles of five postgraduate research writers in order to illustrate the specific types of struggles the postgraduate writers experience while writing academically. It did this by drawing on the notions of autobiographical self/voice (Ivanič

1998) and Barton and Hamilton's (1998) roles and networks to key into the different tensions that emerge when students are developing their voices as researchers and writers. The five tales of struggle foregrounded memories and reflections that the participants felt were important when making sense of their feelings as postgraduate academic writers. For the participants, in this study, these memories included, for example, Jessica's father questioning whether anyone would be 'interested in anything [she] had to say' and Catherine's recollection of feelings she had as a young girl of 'serious' or 'academic' women being 'whimpish'. There were also struggles related to carrying out intellectual work alongside other responsibilities which include, for example, being a mother or financially supporting a family (for example Pippa and Jessica), and all of the participants experienced challenges negotiating their identities as postgraduate researchers and writers. Finally, navigating either or both financial difficulties and professional careers, while pursuing research degrees, brought with it its own difficulties (for example Catherine). The struggle tales also demonstrate that being a postgraduate research student writer meant more than merely acquiring a research degree for many of the women in the study. It meant crafting careers and futures which allowed a greater degree of intellectual fulfilment and, in some cases, financial security (see for example Catherine and Jessica). In this sense, the struggle tales can be seen as tales of persistence and strength, with the participants often writing in spite of, and alongside, challenging personal circumstances.

Personal Reflection: Motherhood, writing, and making a living.



In my home there are several spaces where I write and work. Occasionally, I store the bed away which is usually in a tiny third bedroom we have upstairs (more like a closet with a window and a door). I try to write in this space when we don't need the room for friends and family. This third room is next to my little girl's room so I can hear her play and chat with her in quiet moments. On my desk I have some of the key text books I refer to when writing, as well as articles I would like to get to when I have a spare minute. There is often a space (in this photo it is the notebook and pad to the left) which is dedicated to the work I need to do for my teaching: names of students I need to respond to; work which needs to be marked; lessons I am planning, or syllabi I am getting to know. When writing, I try not to look at the pile which sits three feet behind me. This mass of bits and pieces is an assemblage of just some of the domestic chores I need complete: clothes that need to be taken to a charity shop; a vacuum cleaner I've left upstairs as a reminder I need to vacuum my asthmatic daughter's bedroom; a bag of washed clothes which need to be put into drawers; a bag of baby clothes (which were my six-year-old's) which need to be passed on to a friend who would make better use of them. This small space, is a symbol of the jumble of needs and priorities that make up my life. On the one hand, I have a strong desire to engage in the tasks and responsibilities I choose to take on, and enjoy, as a mother. I am deeply interested in creating spaces for my daughter to grow and, physically, intellectually and emotionally become her own person. But I am also, and have always been, drawn to spaces where I can involve myself in thinking, problem solving and creativity i.e. reading and writing in higher education. I find the processes of thinking, writing and reflecting on ways of knowing not only cathartic – but a necessary part of being a whole person. For me, each of these dimensions – my writing and thinking, as well as my family's physical, emotional and financial care are important. At this moment, though, each of these three worlds are pulling so hard I am frozen – unable to move or gain momentum. I sit here, now, in a coffee shop writing these thoughts in the hope that I might be able to unpick this problem a little. My immediate goal, of course, is to finish this PhD and do the best job I can. It is also to ensure my daughter is provided and cared for. I wonder, in what sense, this is a gendered experience. Does my husband, who lives across the road from my daughter and I, have the same concerns and tensions? Does he ever feel stuck with the multiple tasks in front of him? I ask him and he replies in the following way:

No I don't. I focus on one task at a time and I let all the others fall behind until the core task which is number of hours worked is done with. Occasionally I take on other tasks but it's rare. I'm not bothered about mess, disorder or domestic chores so long as the work gets done. The dishes can stay unwashed for 4 days I don't care. The need for tidiness and cleanliness is more of a female requirement but it's important in a space where there are children and since our daughter creates daily chaos, there's a lot of work for Jen to do which I don't have time to help with. It's not perfect but it works financially. (An extract from an email from Alexander Deidier to Jenny McMullan, 05th December 2015)

I am jealous of my husband's ability to so naturally claim the space in which he works. It seems, at least in this case, the tensions and pressures I feel as I balance the gendered role of motherhood, and my need to think and write, are mine alone.

7 Writing tales: reinventing space

[Jane Austen] wrote only in secret on sheets small enough to be concealed in a book in case someone interrupted. And interruptions were frequent, because she wrote in the family living room. These circumstances were not only a result of the family's relative poverty and the presence in the house of an invalid mother, whose care fell to Jane as an unmarried daughter; daughters were also denied the luxury of the 'room of one's own' that Virginia Woolf considered so essential to a writer. Jane Austen thus depended on the squeaky living room door to keep her from being surprised at her guilty endeavour. To the puzzlement of other family members, she always objected when anyone proposed oiling the hinges. (Dulong in Duby and Perrot, 1992, p. 413)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on a theme which emerged as significant during data analysis, the theme of writing spaces and how space, reinvented, becomes rich with possibilities. The data chosen to illuminate this theme highlight the ways in which every-day places have been re-claimed by research students as writing spaces, spaces re-imagined and inhabited by creative and intellectual productivity. The specific tales included in this chapter have been chosen for the following reasons: first, whilst the importance of space was evident across the data as a whole, these five tales were particularly rich sources of information regarding the ways writing spaces were significant to the academic writing practices of the postgraduate writers; and second, these five specific tales were chosen from the complete data-set in that they represent the range of both occluded and visible texts which constituted the postgraduate writing identified in this study. The tales begin with the most visible texts (e.g. thesis) and move toward the more occluded ones (e.g. supervision minutes).

The chapter is organised as follows. Section 7.2 defines the notions of place and space and the significance of reinventing space for postgraduate writing. This is followed by sections on each of the five writing space tales. The conclusion (7.8) draws together patterns from across these tales to highlight the ways in which writing places and spaces can be seen as significant for all of the participants.

7.2 Defining place and space

While the significance of place and space for affording women the possibility of becoming literary writers has often been emphasised, as signalled in the extract at the beginning of this chapter, relatively little attention has been paid to women academic writers (but see Grant & Knowles, 2000; Reay, 2000).

Geographers have always grappled with the interrelated notions of place and space and have different ideas about their precise significance. According to Agnew (2011) a commonly understood and 'largely uncontroversial' definition (p. 6) of the difference between place and space can be seen in the way that place often refers to a 'location' whereas 'space' has a 'phenomenological' quality:

In the simplest sense place refers to either a location somewhere or to the occupation of that location. The first sense is of having an address and the second is about living at that address. Sometimes this distinction is pushed further to separate the physical place from the phenomenal space in which the place is located. Thus place becomes a particular or lived space. Location then refers to the fact that places must be located somewhere. Place is specific and location (or space) is general. (Agnew, 2011, p. 6)

Agnew (2011) points out that place is sometimes characterised as 'nostalgic, regressive and reactionary' and space is sometimes seen as 'progressive and radical' (p.319). Agnew's contrasts are useful in that they begin to signal how and why theorists and researchers may need to refer to some locations as places while other locations are referred to as spaces. Place is a useful notion because it is often used to signal a more concrete, traditional physical arena, while space allows researchers to grapple with abstract concepts related to the ways people engage with their environments and includes a postmodernist take on the

human subject's locations in the world, one which acknowledges individuals' re-imaginings of every-day places and associated spaces (e.g. Agnew, 2011; Morris, 2014).

The use of space in this way is significant because it signals that participants are agentic, that is that they have the potential to re-claim and re-use more conventionalised places in different ways. Place, then, in this thesis, is used to refer to the ways in which conventionalised routine practices get associated with physical arenas, while space is taken up as a more open category, one which has the potential to accommodate the re-inventions people make of the places in which they live and work. Of course, it is important to note that time cannot be separated from place or space in that people occupy time and place/space when writing. In methodological terms this involves exploring not only where writing happens but when, and in considering the affordances of time/place for enacting and reinventing academic writing as part of postgraduate identity. For example, in Samantha's tale the place in which she is writing is the 'dining room table' 'in the centre of the house', but this 'table' is re-invented as a space in which she can work on a thesis chapter as well as look after her daughter and a friend in their school holidays (see 7.3).

This space-place-time understanding of the human subject's location can be seen to connect strongly with the critical realism perspective that underpins the framing of the study on which this chapter is based (see section 1.4 of this thesis) and evident in the use of 'Tales' which I discuss in section 3.6.4 of this thesis. That is, the realist accounts presented in the writing tales report on what can be observed (the places in which people write), while the critical aspect allows me as the researcher to signal underlying social structures and belief systems which lead student-writers to re-create more conventional places - like a kitchen or a train journey - as spaces for academic thinking and writing. Below the five writing tales are presented. Together they vividly illustrate the importance of place and space for postgraduate writing and signal specific ways in which the practice of academic writing is gendered. In particular, the tales demonstrate how the places in which the women in the study wrote were re-invented to become writing spaces rich with intellectual intention and possibilities.

7.3 Samantha: Writing a thesis chapter at the dining table while the children play outside

Samantha is married with a daughter. While pursuing her PhD at USE, her daughter was transitioning to secondary school and her husband worked full-time. Prior to taking on her postgraduate research studies, for some ten years, Samantha had focussed her daily activities on being a mother and wife. Samantha's background is in education studies and linguistics and she particularly enjoys the systematic, analytical side of studies in applied linguistics. Samantha, who was working on her PhD, planned her time, and the spaces in which she worked, carefully. In the extract below, she explains that one day, while writing at home in the school holidays, she had 'set herself up' on a table 'in the centre of the house'. She had two tasks at hand: first, she was working on a chapter of her thesis (see the second extract below); second, she was caring for two children in her home, a daughter, and her daughter's friend. To enable her to engage as best she could with these two tasks she created a space at her dining room table for her academic writing in which she would not be too far away from the children while writing.

[I am writing] at home and on my dining room table rather than in my study. I only have the morning to work as I have to pick up my daughter (and a friend) from school at 12.00 as school finishes for the holidays today. I have set myself up on the table this morning as while they are playing at home this afternoon I shall do some more work and I am more comfortable being in the centre of the house rather than away in the study while the girls are playing. (An extract from Samantha's writing journal, July 2012)

Below, she describes the specific writing and child-care tasks she was carrying out while working on a draft of her 'chapter 6'. In order to do this, she navigates an 'afternoon' which she describes as 'slightly interrupted'. In terms of her writing, Samantha's aim was to plan how to move forward, in a practical sense, with the chapter she was working. She wanted to 'plan [the chapter] print it out and review it again':

Back to chapter 6 – my daughter and a friend are now home for school. Made lunch and while they were eating that and playing in the garden, I continued with the writing. I have skimmed some conclusions – in particular theses with

‘implications for future research and practice’ to get some ideas of how to structure this section. I have made notes and also some notes for the ethical section of chp. 6 from Gerard McDonald’s work with ethics. This afternoon’s work has been slightly interrupted but I’m happy with my progress on chp 6. It took more work than I thought as I had forgotten a section that I had not yet drafted but my plan will be to print it out and review it again. (An extract from Samantha’s writing journal, July 2012)

It can be seen that, despite having to work in circumstances in which she is needing to attend to different kinds of pressing tasks (both her research-focussed writing and caring for children), she is pleased with the ‘progress’ she makes with her writing. In fact, she was ‘happy’, despite there being even ‘more work’ than she initially thought she had to complete: ‘she had forgotten a section [she had] not yet drafted’. Samantha, then, is able to write, in what might seem for some, challenging circumstances. However, there appears to be no sense of her having to put aside, or make secondary, either of her tasks. Instead she displays creativity with the spaces she has available to her. Samantha, can be seen to be re-inscribing her identity as a mother with the activities and writing of a research student inhabiting everyday places such as at home on a dining table and reconfiguring their significance as spaces for thesis writing and thinking so that she could carry out the work of both mother and research student writer.

7.4 Aisha: Writing a research proposal ‘at home’

Aisha was six months pregnant and had recently moved into a house from an apartment in London to have more space and be closer to USE while she was a research student (August 2013). During this period, she was in the middle of what the university refers to as a year of ‘probation’ for a PhD, for which she was completing a *probation report*. This probation year had been challenging, as she had experienced periods of illness during the earlier months of her pregnancy, and she had also had to negotiate maternity leave with her supervision team (which also meant applying to extend her PhD probation year). The probation report she was writing, could also be described as a research proposal: one which needed to be approved by USE’s business school for her to achieve full PhD status. To complete the proposal, Aisha was drawing on an assignment she had done for her Master in Research

which focussed on ‘knowledge creation’ in the fashion and textiles industry in Sri Lanka (Aisha’s written text, August 2013).

Aisha, who is Sri Lankan and has Sinhalese as her first language, had travelled, and continued to travel, to Sri Lanka, to collect her data for her research. This was one factor which affected the places and spaces in which she worked. Below, is an extract from Aisha’s Master in Research assignment on ‘knowledge creation’. In the extract, she is describing the focus of the research she was carrying out in Sri Lanka:

Consequently, the overall purpose of this research is to explore the existing knowledge in the firm, knowledge creation capabilities (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990) and how this new knowledge leads the firm to generate novel ideas through generating and disseminating organizational knowledge and experiences. (An extract from a written text discussed in an interview with Aisha, August 2013)

The above extract highlights the kinds of ‘business processes’ Aisha was investigating in relationship to ‘knowledge’ in her chosen industry. The verbs she chose to use - *generate* and *disseminate* illustrate the types of processes she planned to observe and record – processes which spoke of the different ways knowledge moved through the people and operations that constituted aspects of the textile and fashion industry in Sri Lanka. Aisha’s interest in the ways in which ‘ideas’ were ‘generated’ and ‘disseminated’ in the fashion and textiles industry, particularly with regard to the ‘sportswear’ sector in Sri Lanka had arisen from both practical and academic experiences. In Sri Lanka she had studied design at degree level as well as work in the industry as this was formally required for her degree. After pursuing her studies in design in Sri Lanka, she relocated to the UK and acquired an undergraduate degree in design in London.

The places in which Aisha worked and wrote about her research had specific social and cultural implications. For example, the factories in Sri Lanka – sites in which Aisha was collecting data – were places where Aisha worked more frequently with the male employees. This reflected, according to Aisha, the nature of the factories, where the women employees tended to be on the floor working as machinists and the men had better access to the ‘technical’ side of the industry. It was through this technical side that Aisha felt more able to engage with the industry’s knowledge creation processes. Below, Aisha

foregrounds the sportswear industry's tendency to create 'technological product innovations':

The researcher [here, Aisha is referring to herself] chose to study the sportswear industry for three reasons. Firstly, it is a relatively small industry characterised by technological product innovations and a long product development cycle, in comparison to short-term, seasonal product development (fast fashion) in the apparel industries. The second reason is that it requires knowledge from diverse industries. Thirdly, the researcher has a personal interest and experience in sports and technical textile design where she found these distinctions between innovation in sportswear development and traditional fashion designing process. (An extract from Aisha's Master in Research assignment discussed in an interview with Aisha, August 2013)⁶

Aisha's experiences of conducting research and writing about her research are strongly coloured by the places and spaces in which she was living, working and writing. First, she was pursuing a PhD which required her to travel between two different countries, and this meant working across different cultural and social contexts – and these changing spaces brought with them a range of gendered practices.

Second, her personal circumstances, which changed at various points throughout her studies, meant that the domestic spaces in which she wrote changed too. For example, during her research, she needed to find ways to write while she and her husband accommodated her parents in their small flat in London – and she would then need to do the same when she moved into a house. The following extract highlights some of the challenges Aisha experienced related to space, while her parents were visiting:

[Aisha's parents] were giving me kind of, disturbance, but then they realise...then they understand, they say 'ok, what are you doing all the night?' because I'm my person, I'm doing everything in the night. Then after a few months they realised my

⁶ Aisha was drawing on this Master in Research to write the research proposal for her PhD probation year.

pattern and they don't basically disturb me because I was doing this one, my research, the MRes. (Interview with Aisha, August 2013)

Third, as she was pregnant in the summertime, she chose to move her research-focussed writing to a room with greater privacy where she could 'open the door' to get fresh air:

A: but I use the conservatory now because I'm ...so I need to open the door

J: the door, you need the fresh air...

A: yeah, and in the summertime, conservatory [laughing] feel like so comfortable, but basically I don't want people around me....

J: ok, that's great so, at the moment, even though you're pregnant you're still working a bit at night?

A: Not night, but mostly day time I'm doing now. (An Interview with Aisha, August 2013)

Aisha's movements in space and time reflected her desire to keep writing academically in changing circumstances – both in terms of securing a place which was cool and comfortable, but also provided her with privacy. Her writing space tale illustrates sharply the kinds of changing spaces postgraduate research writers may be required to carry out research and write within. The tale also highlights the different ways spaces can be imbued with social, cultural and personal implication. Finally, each space required that Aisha engage in some kind of re-invention, so that she was able to continue to write, as well as manage the changing circumstances of her life.

7.5 Cosima: Writing a 'philosophical statement' in the car

Cosima was pursuing an English-medium doctorate in Education on a part-time basis with USE. In the two years she participated in the postgraduate research writing study, she lived first in Italy, and then in the UK with her husband, who is a full-time academic, and two children. Cosima, who was the primary caretaker of the children, found time to write in the moments she was alone, when her children were at school and her husband was at work, often writing before or after she had completed the laundry or the cooking. Below, Cosima described one of the ways she carved out time to write:

I usually work at home, and most of the time, either here or in the living room or I move to the kitchen. I have a desk but it's not just for me, so my research things are not located in one spot. I have to take them out and then put them away and that also doesn't help, because by the time I spread [out the books] you know, just to have a look at them - it's time to put them away (An interview with Cosima, May 2011)

There were tensions for Cosima related to her academic writing, competing priorities which shaped both the places in which she wrote, as well as the ways she worked on her research. In her home, she was required to carry out the domestic responsibilities of a parent, but also chose to pursue reading and writing for her research degree, even if it meant 'follow[ing] ideas' for relatively brief amounts of time. In terms of place, it is significant that 'her research things [were] not located in one spot': there is a sense of her writing being transient and dynamic, accompanying her throughout her daily activities. This image of Cosima's writing moving with her, can also be seen in the way that she wrote on the road, in her car, while her children were in organised activities, like tutoring or playing in an indoor play-centre. Figure 15 is a picture Cosima took to illustrate where she carried out her writing. The car is significant to Cosima because it is a place she re-invented as an academic writing space, a space in which she produced what she refers to as the 'philosophical statement' text.



Figure 15 The space in which Cosima wrote ‘a philosophical statement’ about the progress of her research, December 2015

An English translation of the text Cosima was writing in the car is in Figure 16: a text which Cosima refers to as a ‘philosophical statement’ which she originally wrote in Italian. Her purpose in writing the text was to reflect on the progress of her research. To the right of the philosophical statement is an extract from an interview in which this text was discussed. Cosima wrote the philosophical statement to try and get to the bottom of a problem which had been troubling her: she had been experiencing a feeling of ‘going in circles’ when working on her research. This text then was an institutionally occluded text that she chose to write to enable her to move forward on a particular problem. Through her philosophical statement, one can see that she had come to the conclusion that her research needed to move toward an ‘analysis’ of her data in order to address the challenges she was experiencing.

A text which Cosima refers to as a ‘philosophical statement’ which she wrote in Italian. The text’s purpose is to reflect on the progress of her research (the memo was a written text discussed in Cosima’s interview):

I⁷ must have a look at everything again, because it is time to go ahead. I must review the comments on the section on Grounded Theory in progress report five and rewrite only the minimum necessary. The same goes for the area of interest and the literature review. Only a summary to explain where I began. The piece I wrote this morning.

I must re-read all data, including the literature, in order to allow the concepts to emerge. But the literature only afterwards. The same for the research questions.

I begin with the analysis of the interviews with the experts. The logic is theoretical sampling and snowball sampling (but with logic: each expert knows someone because they are few and in the end, I will have another opportunity to speak with many of the people involved if not with all of them).

I must write to Gianni and Santini to ask them more about the role of non-academic historians and on the public role of the historian in connection with digital communication.

I must write something on the language issue.

[An English translation of a written text discussed in an interview with Cosima, March 2012]

Figure 16 Cosima’s philosophical statement

7

(the participant) provided the English translation

Below, Cosima is discussing the philosophical statement she has written about her research (see a translation of the text on the left):

Cosima: it is saying that - I was writing the sixth study report at the time - ... I found, going back to the previous one [study report] that I was making the same mistakes, I was writing too much about - I’m trying to think what the supervisor said - I think he said something like emotional load [...] of course I have to speak about my situation as well: [why] I started this research, why I am speaking to Italian scholars or, some things I have to say...but he said it was a little bit too [pauses]

J: personal?

Cosima: Yes, it was a little bit too emotional and I realised I was doing exactly the same thing, going in circles, why I was doing the research, what the problems were and, so I have to re-do it from the start, and instead of explain why so much, I need to go forward and just go to analysis and see what happens ..., so this was more of a reminder to myself that I wasn’t sure what I was going to write but I had to change what I was starting to write.

[An extract from Cosima’s interview, March 2012]

The nature of the places, like the car in which Cosima wrote academically, can be seen to illuminate a specific kind of writing practice: that is, she wrote in short bursts of activity which came before and after other tasks and responsibilities, or, as is the case above, while waiting for her children to finish participating in activities. The places clearly had temporary qualities, for example, in the kitchen at home she felt she needed to take out, and then pack away her books. Yet the fact that these places were temporary - and sometimes the texts brief - did not mean the writing was insignificant. These places became important spaces in which ideas were formed and articulated. For example, the text Cosima wrote in her car captured a moment in which she decided to change the direction of her research: 'so I have to re-do it from the start, and instead of explaining why so much, I need to go forward and just go to analysis and see what happens..., so this was more of a reminder to myself that I wasn't sure what I was going to write but I had to change what I was starting to write'.

In Cosima's text there is a repetition of 'I must' which preceded all of the different tasks she sees she has before her in order for her research to progress:

'I must have a look at everything again, because it is time to go ahead.'

'I must re-read all data, including the literature, in order to allow the concepts to emerge'

'I must write to Gianni and Santini to ask them more about the role of non-academic historians'

'I must write something on the language issue.'

This repetition of 'I must' gives a sense that Cosima was seeking to inhabit a specific type of textual space which in part enabled an active self-disciplining. This desire to use the textual space to self-discipline can also be seen in the way she revisits the voice of her supervisor about the 'emotional load' of her written text, which Cosima glosses in discussion as her text being 'a little bit too emotional'. The fact that she signals a need to 'change what [she] was starting to write' also demonstrates the way she uses the occluded textual space to actively work at changing the direction of her academic writing.

Consequently, in Cosima's car; in what some might perceive as a relatively small, non-descript, moment in which she carried out the work of childcare; she initiated a shift in the direction of her research toward one which she felt would be more satisfying for her supervisors and herself. She can also be seen to be reflecting on ways in which, in her academic writing, she could inhabit a specific type of discourse, a discourse which carried less of an 'emotional load'.

Cosima's life was undoubtedly materially gendered in specific ways: she was a mother and wife with responsibilities as the caretaker of her family's domestic lives with fragmented time for postgraduate research and writing. But she was also a postgraduate student embarking on her trajectory as a researcher, academic and writer. Through Cosima's production of this brief, occluded text it is possible to see how Cosima literally, and figuratively, re-invented space that layered onto her mother/wife identity and constituted her newly developing role and identity as a research student, producing academic texts.

7.6 Yasmin: Writing supervision minutes at home and on the train

Yasmin is a professional who works in management roles on a full-time basis in the financial services sector in London. She described herself as being in her fifties with grown children and one grandchild. She has a husband who has a 'house husband' role in her home, which she describes as being very helpful to her career and studies. While pursuing her research at USE, Yasmin's employer provided her with an annual train ticket to London and although some of her writing was carried out late in the evening in her study at home, she did much of her research-related writing on commutes to and from her workplace.

Below she describes where and when she usually wrote her academic texts:

I get a ... and a cup of tea and, so I'll take my laptops and my books and I will [...] on the train for two hours a day sometimes to read or write, and then the other place is at home where we've got quite a big bedroom converted into an office, with a huge...but it's not a desk, we've put in a great big dining table and my husband sits one side and I sit the other with our own computers, so I spread out in there and I don't get as much time as I would like to due to working, but I did a lot on the train.

(An interview with Yasmin, April 2012)

The particular writing space of the train brought different pleasures and challenges for Yasmin. For example, on the one hand she saw the train as providing her with a 'great source of opportunity' to read and write, but there were also times when she struggled to concentrate when other passengers were talking.

During her postgraduate studies, Yasmin was regularly required to write a set of minutes which were a record of sessions with supervisors. Whilst the requirement to keep such minutes is increasingly common in UK higher education, the texts produced are towards the more occluded end of the continuum in that they are not assessed or recognised as a key academic writing genre at postgraduate level. On one occasion, when writing these minutes, the effects of writing late at night in her study after a full day at work, were evident. Yasmin states:

Tonight's challenges are similar to last night. It's late and I'm tired, and I went for physio today, so I am in a lot of pain too. Writing at the computer is hard when my neck hurts like this so I will keep it short. (An extract from Yasmin's writing journal, July 2012)

In the extract above, it is clear this is not the first time Yasmin has had to write 'in pain': in this instance she is writing in pain for the second night in a row. From her writing journals and interview, one of the reasons she pushes herself to work late, and through pain, becomes clear: she is driven by a commitment to improving practices of collaboration between the different sectors she is working with, both in industry and in academia:

We should be collaborating across all sorts of areas in the business [financial services sector] but we actually don't, so it's not just typical in the consulting industry it seems to be typical in other organisations and professions as well. (An interview with Yasmin, April 2012)

It's weird but I don't want to appear to be taking sides [when writing the supervision minutes] or have a favourite. It's like I am thinking about my children! (Extract from Yasmin's writing journal, July 2012)

Below, two extracts from the supervision minutes (a two-part document) are presented. Extract one is Yasmin's account of a part of a supervision session with two (of the three)

supervisors. Extract two, is the first two points from a session with a different supervisor. The equitable representation that Yasmin was trying to achieve in the textual account of discussions with the different supervisors of the text is demonstrated in these extracts. First, both extracts (parts of the minutes) begin by Yasmin describing a comment made by supervisors on her use of language: see, for example, Extract one in which a supervisor says, 'it was important to back up any judgements made with reasons why you reached that conclusion' and, in Extract two, there is the comment 'good use of language'. Second, both extracts include points on comments made by the supervisors on issues related to researching 'different parts' of an organisation and how tensions between these different parts might be explored and represented. Extract one does this by including a reminder that Yasmin needs to 'explain why the HR and Finance teams were not working well together' (Extract one); and, in Extract 2 the minutes remind Yasmin to explore 'competing dialogues' between 'parts of an organisation' (Extract two).

EXTRACT ONE

Meeting notes 25th July 2012

Jenny Mundy, Stephen Johns, (at MYB), followed by Jaquez Deidier on skype

MYB discussions

- 1) On Yasmin's latest piece of writing, JM/JD commented that it was important to back up any judgements made with reasons why you reached that conclusion. For example, explain why the HR and Finance teams were not working well together, with some evidence, and try and describe what was going on when the mood (power dynamics) changed.

EXTRACT TWO

Skype discussions with SJ

- 1) Good use of language in latest submission and plenty of reading done.
- 2) When examining the competing dialogues within different parts of an organisation, consider the organisational vernacular as a useful angle. Often the vernacular can become a levelling vehicle, for example the language of finance can be common ground to talk about risk (see Bill Nixon – Dundee) (Extracts from a written text discussed in an interview with Yasmin, April 2012)

In addition to Yasmin actively working towards bringing balance and equity to the 'two sets of minutes', time is of concern to her. Yasmin is anxious about finding the time to check the accuracy of the authors' names she has included in her minutes and explains that she feels pressure to 'look all these people up' and check she has 'got the right spellings'. She feels 'it will take many more hours to look all these people up ...' and, she explains: 'What I need to do now is submit the minutes quickly' (April 2012). Time, then, can also be seen to be an important dimension of the space Yasmin is writing from, most obviously limited time, which played a role in the shaping of her text.

Yasmin thus re-invented the spaces before and after her professional work in the financial services industry, both on the train, and at home, to actively bring about, or re-inscribe, changes to her professional existence, changes which also had resonance for her as a parent. In Yasmin's case, she was specifically interested in bringing about changes in the workplace focussed on a higher quality of collaboration. This belief in collaboration can also be seen to play a role in her crafting of the text: she felt it was important to structure her written text to represent her three supervisors equally. This latter point is also indicative of Yasmin's writing representing different, possibly gendered, kinds of work. That is, her writing is both academic and emotional in the sense that while doing the intellectual work, she is also taking care to respect the feelings and status' of her supervisors. Yasmin's writing of these minutes, then, can also be seen as a form of re-inscription of what it means (in her life) to be both a professional working in the financial sector as well as a postgraduate research student producing written texts that are meaningful in her specific context.

7.7 Clara: Writing about 'potential studies' on the train

Prior to pursuing a PhD in business and communications full-time in a faculty at USE, Clara had worked at universities and government services. For Clara, an important reason for pursuing a research qualification was to take time out of her career to explore an issue which had been troubling her when she had worked professionally in a range of government services and university contexts. The issue was related to communications in the workplace and the contexts in which people do, or do not, openly discuss matters they feel are important in organisations. Below, is an extract from a written text Clara wrote (for her PhD) so that she could provide theoretical background related to her research topic

and introduce several potential research sites from which she might collect data. Clara refers to this written text as a 'paper' and begins it by explaining she was asked to write it in a recent supervision meeting:

This paper aims to clarify my research topic and set out the research questions I will be addressing. In particular, the paper looks at the following which was the brief suggested after our last supervision meeting:

more detail on the connections between the different writers and theories on group development, communication and social constructionism which will provide a background for my own research; and the implications of the above for my research methodology and the type of studies to which I will be seeking access. (A written text discussed in an interview with Clara, April 2012)

Clara's decision to pursue her PhD meant that she needed to make significant changes to the places in which she was living. These included, for example, moving to the other side of the country, away from her long-term partner into a small house close to the USE campus. Clara clearly felt positive about these changes. Below, is an extract from a writing journal in which she described that she was writing the same paper referred to above on a train, on the way to a conference:

As I write this, I'm sitting on a train and quite aware that I'm the only one with a laptop and a work jacket in sight in the rail carriage. It's in marked contrast to when I last made this journey, and represents a big step for me away from my previous life and into this academic life which I think is significant for me as a woman, not having had the confidence to do it before. The writing is part of the new life.

(Extract from Clara's writing journal, July 2012)

In this extract, Clara explicitly points out the ways in which the place in which she is working has meaning for her: she explains that it is a new experience being the 'only one [on the train] with a laptop and a work jacket'. She also explains that her new 'academic

life', of which 'writing' is a central part, is symbolic of important changes she believes she didn't have the 'confidence' to make 'before'.

The train is significant in terms of writing spaces, then, because it was facilitating an intellectual journey in which Clara was actively re-writing future possibilities and developing a new professional/academic identity for herself. Below, is an extract from the writing journal Clara kept for this research, in which she reflects on the personal significance of the paper:

[The paper is] a piece to describe the potential studies available for my research, which I want to give to my supervisors for discussion at next supervision meeting on Wednesday. I haven't started this yet, and so I only have Mon and Tues to complete it since I will be occupied with travelling home on Sunday. I am looking forward to the task since it represents an achievement - I've actually managed (it seems like, currently) to get people interested in allowing me access to their study meetings and so doing my research. This is news hot off the press since I only had the meeting with the study staff on Thurs and have been occupied with this residential school ever since. (Extract from Clara's writing journal, July 2012)

Clara's writing journal reflects the surprise and pleasure she is experiencing in response to successes with her research: 'I've actually managed to get people interested in allowing me access to their study meetings'. Her description of this news being 'hot off the press' emphasises her excitement as she records her progress. What is significant about these specific reflections, is that Clara explicitly makes connections between the writing she was carrying out and the significance this had for her in terms of gender: '[it] is significant for me as a woman, not having had the confidence to do it before' (Clara's writing journal, July 2012). Clara feels strongly, that the writing of her research, then, is enabling her to move beyond restrictions she has had, in the past, relating to 'confidence' which she signals as being related to her positionality 'as a woman'.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the significance of writing spaces of five postgraduate women researchers, Samantha, Aisha, Cosima, Yasmin and Clara. It did this by first providing a clear definition of place and space, and the ways that these notions have been taken up

throughout this thesis. This was followed by a presentation of five writing tales which drew on ethnographic data, to illustrate the lived realities of postgraduate writing for participants. The five postgraduate writers represented in the tales were not chosen because they were the only five of the 16 in the larger study for whom writing places and spaces were significant, but because the data collected from each of these participants was particularly illustrative of the significance of writing places and spaces to becoming a postgraduate writers and researcher.

Emerging from these five tales, there are four important findings which run through each of the women's experiences of academic writing in these spaces. First, the participants in this study actively created writing spaces in lives in which different, high-priority tasks like work and parenting competed for attention (see for example, Samantha and Clara). Second, even though these writing spaces were often temporary creations, they were rarely unproductive in terms of carrying out writing which contributed to the development of their research: brief moments working away at a text sometimes brought about important changes in directions of research (as in Cosima's 'philosophical statement'). Third, postgraduate writers often sought to inhabit their newly emerging academic identity through the inscription of specific textual spaces. This can be seen in Cosima's repetition of 'I must' when she was describing the process of writing a philosophical statement about the progress of her research; and Yasmin's need to write in ways she saw as 'balanced' and fair towards her supervisors. Further, a focus on women postgraduate researchers' writing spaces, allowed insights into the ways that academic writing can be integral in bringing about changes in individuals' lives. Clara's tale, and her explicit statement that the writing was bringing about a new life for her, is a particularly vivid example of this. It is important, too, to comment on the ways that the re-inscription of such spaces brought to life the gendered dimensions of these five participants' writing practices. This gendering can be seen in the way that the women postgraduates managed multiple spaces around care and domestic responsibility and reinvented a range of domestic and travel places as spaces (often temporary as in the case of trains and cars) for carrying out academic writing. Yasmin, for example, drew on her lived experience as a parent to make decisions about the textual features of her supervision minutes, foregrounding the fact that the more explicitly gendered dimensions in her life (being a mother, for example) have had on her academic writing practices.

I will now discuss the Findings across the whole thesis, the limitations of the study, the potential for further research and pedagogical implications.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I begin by returning to the research questions set out in Chapter 1 of this thesis and consider how the analysis and findings from across the four data-based chapters respond to these questions (see 8.2). In 8.3, I turn to a discussion of the key contributions made by this study and thesis to the field of postgraduate academic writing, which centre on the following areas: extending the current available empirical database on the different kinds of written texts produced by postgraduate students; highlighting the significance of place and space to postgraduates' experiences of academic writing; exploring the significance of gender to women postgraduate students' engagement in academic writing; and foregrounding the value of tales as a unit of analysis and representation. In 8.4 I provide an account of the limitations of the study on which this thesis is based, and in 8.5 I signal further areas of the study on which additional research could be carried out. In 8.6, I outline key pedagogical implications of the findings presented in this thesis.

8.2 Revisiting the research questions

8.2.1 RQ1: What are the academic writing practices of postgraduate research students in the first two years of their research studies at a UK based university?

Findings indicate that postgraduate writing practices are constituted by the writing of a range of texts which are of different and specific significance to postgraduate writers. In the study upon which this thesis is based, 82 written texts were documented (either collected or referred to by participants), some of which are more institutionally visible than others. While the more institutionally visible texts constitute the primary focus of research to date, this study found that texts from both ends of the occluded/visible continuum (Swales 2004 and 1996; see also thesis Chapter 4), play a key part in postgraduate writing practices. Discussion around occluded texts such as supervision minutes, curriculum vitae and written transcripts of interviews signal that research students engage in many different kinds of writing in the formative years of their research studies, regardless of their discipline.

The written texts which were documented in this study were categorised according to their primary function (see Chapter 4). See 8.3 (key contributions) below for a list of these functional categories. Connections between these functional categories and the students' disciplinary areas were evident (see 4.5). For example, the Business; Education and Wellbeing and Social Care disciplinary areas were the only ones in which texts were documented as being related to *Administering Research*. This specific category consisted of, for example, documents written in preparation for supervision and research proposals for PhD applications, emails to supervisors and supervision minutes. The two categories in which most written texts were placed were *Conventional Research Genres* and *Administering Research*. The second largest group of texts were classified as *Parts of a Thesis*. Finally, 16% of all written texts (13 texts) were produced by the two Physical Science students. This indicates it is not just students in Social Sciences who are producing a large number of written texts in the formative years of their research journeys, Physical Science students, too, are producing many written texts. These findings indicate that the range of potential texts postgraduate research students from different disciplines are requested to write may deserve more attention in pedagogical contexts which are designed to support students with their writing or research skills (see 8.6 below).

From the study it is clear that the writing of a wide range of texts, from institutionally visible to occluded, held significance for writers in different ways. For example, Chapter 4 (4.5) presented extracts of texts: a monthly plan, a case-study and a literature review. Each of these texts were purposeful for their student writers in very specific ways, regardless of their positioning on the occluded/visible cline developed for this study (with the monthly plan being the most occluded and the literature review the least). For example, the monthly plan acted as a means of monitoring and navigating a science experiment with different threads (a text which would have informed other key research texts) and the case-study acted as a means of collating and representing data for another participant. Through an exploration of written texts, section 4.5 was able to demonstrate that each text underpinned a different, but important research activity, in the first two years of a postgraduate students' research journey. In 8.2.2 below, I discuss the perspectives of postgraduate writers about their written texts in more detail.

It is important to note that the written texts documented in the course of this study were not all the texts written by the students in the first two years of their research qualifications. This indicates that although this study can claim that a wide range of texts are produced in the first two years, it is likely that an even greater number of texts are produced from a wider range of categories as part of postgraduate study and warrants further investigation (see also the limitations of this study – 8.4).

Understanding writing practices, of course, involves not only documenting texts but exploring the practices in which such texts are embedded. Many of the participants can be seen to have developed individual strategies which helped them to craft specific texts, like imagining potential audiences (see Jessica's tale 5.7 and Valerie's tale 5.6). By imagining audiences, these postgraduate writers were able to move forward when they felt they had limited explicit guidance on how to write a specific text. For example, Jessica (in 5.7) imagined readers who were made up of two groups: parents and academics. This strategy enabled her to move forward and make decisions about the crafting of an academic text she felt would speak to both groups.

An investigation into the writing practices of the postgraduate students also highlighted the importance of the professional and intellectual relationships framing and informing academic writing at the postgraduate level. When writing a specific text, for example, Jessica experienced tensions related to when and where it was appropriate to ask for support or advice for her academic writing (5.7). Pippa too experienced difficulties asking for support during a period in which she was developing knowledge about what constitutes 'conventional' academic discourses in academic writing in Business disciplinary contexts, particularly when she was working on literature reviews (see Pippa's tale in 5.3). Jessica, similarly, struggled with delineating her topic in her 'discussion document', and was unsure whether it was appropriate to ask a more senior academic for help (see Jessica's tale in 5.7). Clara experienced challenges writing a presentation for a conference while she was still in the early stages of her data collection. She felt she had limited data and newly forming ideas to work with, and also felt that her supervisors had made it clear they had limited availability in terms of supporting her with her writing (see Clara's tale in 5.4). Similarly, Ellie encountered difficulties writing about newly forming ideas whilst processing, and coming to terms with, a wide range of feedback from her supervisors. Ellie felt it would

have been beneficial to have had more time with her supervisors discussing and processing their feedback (see Ellie's tale in 5.4). Valerie's experience of writing articles for publication was an interesting contrast to the other *tales* in Writing tales: crafting texts tales. Valerie actively, and confidently, sought out input and feedback from different stakeholders as she was writing her article (which she then went on to publish in a science and communications journal) (see Valerie's tale in 5.6). Consequently, the perspectives of these writers of their research focussed writing signal the importance of relationships between supervisors and other senior academics to postgraduate research students' academic writing practices. Of significance throughout the participants' experiences of writing during research degrees is the idea that postgraduate writers are sometimes unsure about the circumstances in which it is appropriate to ask for support or guidance from their supervisors or more senior academic colleagues. All the participants, except for Valerie, expressed a desire to have further, more detailed discussions, with their supervisors about the specific texts they were writing in the formative years of their postgraduate degrees. It may be that more research is needed in order to highlight this as a particular need in these initial years of postgraduate students' research writing, in comparison with the summative years of students writing in research degrees.

Connections can be seen between the literature and the findings of the first research question. First, in terms of the range of texts foregrounded above, postgraduates' written texts can be seen as both occluded and visible to different degrees, as well as performing different functions. This documented range of texts expands on the literature exploring postgraduates' written texts (see the literature review of this thesis, 2.2) which, to date, has largely focussed on more traditional text types like the thesis. In addition, the experience of the participants in this study can be seen to strengthen findings focussed on the impact of key people, like academics, supervisors and tutors on the development of specific texts (see, for example Chiu, 2015 and Huang 2010 in 2.3). The importance of internal motivation, alongside external forms of motivation including supervisory support, for postgraduate writers was foregrounded by Belcher and Hirvela (2005). This work connects with a key theme in this thesis, the sense that postgraduate research students often found themselves grappling with difficult issues and decisions related to their postgraduate research writing, both independently and with other key people, like supervisors or advisors.

I will now turn to a discussion of the key findings related to the perspectives of postgraduate research students as they pursue their research qualifications.

8.2.2 RQ2: What are the perspectives of postgraduate research students about the writing they carry out while pursuing research qualifications?

The postgraduate research writers in this study presented a range of different perspectives on their experiences of postgraduate writing which are evident across the four data-based chapters. Below I discuss these as three broad themes.

First, specific tensions were evident where intellectual work and writing work were carried out alongside other life-roles and responsibilities, like being a mother (see Catherine's tale, for example in 6.5). Tensions foregrounded by the participants also included struggles related to inhabiting professional or career roles which were needed to financially support a family or a break from a career (for example Pippa and Catherine's tales in Chapter 6 and Clara's in Chapter 7).

Second, by bringing an emic lens to the perspectives of postgraduate research writers, the pleasures and struggles that often accompany inhabiting a researcher identity (as a postgraduate research student) were illuminated. Both Chapters 5 and 6 presented examples of these struggles and made connections with voice, with analyses in Chapter 5 staying closer to the crafting of individual texts (which is illustrated through the notions of *identity*, *potential addressees* and *occluded and visible texts*- see 5.2), and the analyses in Chapter 6 highlighting the ways that memories and experiences related to writing can have an impact on developing identities. Alison (in 6.3), Ellie (in 5.4), Pippa (in 6.4), Jessica (in 5.7) and Catherine (in 6.5), for example, felt they experienced struggles directly related to taking on identities as academics and writers of research. These struggles were often expressed through talk of memories and experiences they had had as young children or young adults being women with ideas and intellectual voices: for example, Catherine's memory of women with 'serious' things to say as being 'whimpish' (see 6.5), and Alison's memory of being encouraged to clean her house, rather than 'have her nose in a book' (6.3).

Third, there were indications that through their postgraduate writing and research, many of the women enjoyed a greater degree of intellectual fulfilment, and felt empowered

building professional and personal lives in which their intellectual roles and networks were a more prominent part (see for example Clara's and Yasmin's tales in Chapter 7 and Pippa's tales in Chapter 6 of this thesis).

In summary, the perspectives that the participants expressed signalled that being a postgraduate research student writer meant more than merely acquiring a research degree for many of the women in the study. It meant crafting lives in which they were able to do intellectual work and express ideas that were significant to them, their families and their careers (see, for example, Cosima 6.7). To do this, the participants carried out complex identity work as they crafted academic texts (see 2.5 of the literature review) and inhabited multiple roles and networks in order to write as postgraduate research students (see Chapter 6).

Connections between these findings and the literature can be seen in the way that the literature around voice highlights the importance of identity work to academic writing, including the identity/voice work carried out related to the autobiographical self (Ivanič, 1998). Section 2.5 of this thesis provides a review of other relevant literature related to voice. The findings from this thesis add to this body of literature in that the participants' perspectives about their writing provide important insights into the nature of this identity work as it is carried out by individual postgraduate student writers (see also 5.2 *voice and the crafting of texts* and 6.2 *voice, roles and networks*).

I will now turn to a discussion of the ways that gender is a significant dimension to the participants' academic writing practices.

8.2.3 RQ3: In what ways is gender a significant dimension to postgraduate research students' academic writing practices?

The significance of gender to the academic writing practices of the postgraduate research students is difficult to explore empirically. However, within the critical realist approach I have adopted, gender can be shown to be significant in two ways. First, in 'on the record' accounts by participants (for discussion see Swann, 2002, p. 52 - 56), that is where they explicitly refer to a gendered aspect of their experience. An example is Cosima's explicit statement about the importance of research to the way in which she would like to be known in her family:

I would like to be able to show the children that, ... I can also do this kind of work, and it's interesting, that it's doable, that mummies can also do it too. (An Interview with Cosima, July 2011)

Here she makes an on-the-record comment about gender through reference to 'mummies can also do it too'. Similar on-the-record comments are evident across the tales (see for example Clara's tale, 7.7 and Jessica's tale, 6.6).

Secondly, gender was indexed through indirect comments about the participants' lived experience. This is most evident in relation to the significance of place and space to the postgraduate women researchers. This thesis illustrated the re-inscription of spaces, most obviously through the need for the women postgraduates to manage multiple spaces around care and domestic responsibility but also the reinvention of a range of domestic and travel places as spaces (often temporary as in the case of trains and cars) for carrying out academic writing (see Chapter 7). The participants' use of time, too, can be seen as indexing gender in that, even though these writing spaces were often temporary creations because of the participants' responsibilities to their families or their work places, re-invented spaces often facilitated writing which contributed to the development of research: for example, brief moments working away at a text sometimes brought about important changes in directions of research (as in Cosima's 'philosophical statement'). The places and spaces in which the participants wrote, then, were important: the reinventions of places into writing spaces illustrated the determination and creativity with which postgraduate students often take on multiple roles while carrying out their research and writing.

It is also worth considering whether the value attached to occluded texts indexes gender. All texts were valued by and valuable to the women in the study, regardless of discipline. Occluded texts are evident across many of the data chapters, see for example, the written texts discussed in 4.2; Jessica's *discussion document* in 5.7; Cosima's *philosophical statement* (7.5); Yasmin's *supervision minutes* (7.6), and Clara's text *about potential projects* (7.7) for her PhD data analyses. In terms of these texts and their connections to gender, the writers can be seen to be enacting a process whereby they actively inhabit their newly emerging academic identities through the inscription of these occluded textual

spaces. These occluded spaces may be a way in which women are enacting and re-writing their identities from the margins into these traditional institutional contexts.

Finally, a focus on women postgraduate researchers' writing practices allowed insights into the ways that academic writing can be perceived as integral in bringing about changes in individual women's lives. These changes can be seen, for example, in Clara's tale, and her explicit statement that the writing was bringing about a new life for her and Jessica's statement that she 'always knew [she] was capable of doing more' (see Chapter 7 of this thesis). I see this dimension of academic writing as indexing gender rather than participants identifying it as gendered in that there is a sense – to take up Lather's notion of 'feminist consciousness raising' (1991, p. 127) - that the changes that occurred as a result of writing within a research degree, at times, constituted intellectual and professional freedoms which felt, at times, new or unexpected. It is important to note, however, that exploring change in detail is not the primary focus of this thesis and there is more work to be done in this area (see 8.5).

In 8.3 I will outline key contributions to the field of postgraduate academic writing.

8.3 Key contributions to the field of postgraduate academic writing

8.3.1 The range of academic writing, occluded and visible

On an empirical level, this thesis constitutes a contribution to current understandings of the range of academic writing practices which are known and reported on in postgraduate research writing contexts:

First, by increasing the visibility of the range of different texts that are produced in postgraduate research students' studies. This has been done primarily in two ways. Firstly, it has done so by positioning the texts on a cline of occluded and visible, thereby drawing attention to the range of writing that occurs in the formative years of research study. This study's contributions include the documentation of other, occluded texts like supervision minutes and transcriptions, drawing attention to the different kinds of writing that underpins research activity and highlighting pedagogic possibilities related to these more occluded text types.

Second, the study on which this thesis is based was also able to demonstrate that all of these occluded and visible texts perform different functions. The specific functional groupings developed during the study on which this this thesis is based were: *employment related; administering research; working with data; postgraduate research planning; reflections written during research; 'conventional' academic genres; reporting on research progress; coursework assignments; parts of a thesis, and full thesis drafts*. Significantly, all students, including Physical Science students, created texts which performed different functions. More research may be necessary, however, on the specific texts (and their corresponding functions) which different disciplines find useful in terms of progressing their research.

Key contributions also include the fact that this study of writing practices has built on other studies which have shown the importance of relationships between supervisors, tutors and writers (see, for example Chiu, 2015 and Huang 2010 in 2.3) by presenting actual accounts by postgraduate writers which describe moments where these relationships have had an impact on the crafting of a written text.

8.3.2 The significance of place and space in postgraduate academic writing

The significance of place and space is a key contribution made by this thesis to the field of postgraduate academic writing. All of the participants in the study actively re-invented spaces in which their everyday work was carried out, see, for example, Yasmin and Clara's train journeys (7.6 and 7.7) and Samantha's kitchen table (7.3). See also 7.2 for a more detailed discussion of the significance of place and space to academic writing practices. Bringing the concept of space/place from critical geography (Agnew, 2011) to postgraduate academic writing allows particular insights into the importance of place/space in academic writing and in particular (in this study) to writing as a gendered practice. Attention to place and space foregrounds the ways that the women in the study found ways to take on multiple roles and engage in multiple networks (see Chapter 6 of this thesis) including, for example, the domestic responsibilities they choose to be responsible for, in addition to their research and writing. Below, I discuss writing as a gendered practice in more detail.

8.3.3 Postgraduate writing as a gendered practice

This thesis has contributed insights into the way in which postgraduate academic writing can be considered a gendered practice. As discussed above (8.2.3) the significance of gender is indicated by on-the-record comments and accounts indexing the significance of gender.

The gendered nature of academic writing is evident in on-the-record accounts of the memories many of the participants had of their intellectual selves not being taken seriously, or being encouraged to focus on other dimensions of their lives, instead of research and writing. These memories and reflections had an impact on how individuals felt as early career academics and writers of research. Specifically, with regard to writing, these memories appeared to affect the identities and voices postgraduate writers felt they could inhabit at any given time with regard to their writing (see Chapter 6, 6.2 for *voice*, *roles and networks* and for a discussion of voice which stays closer to texts, see *voice and the crafting of texts* see Chapter 5, 5.2).

Accounts which index the significance of gender are, first, ones which point to the participants' valuing occluded as well as more visible texts (see Chapter 4). These could be interpreted as a gendered dimension of postgraduate writing in that these, interim, 'smaller' textual moments enable individuals to find ways to inhabit the researcher/postgraduate student persona in gradual ways, from very early stages in their postgraduate writing careers. There is a sense of process with regard to participants inhabiting the new identifications they feel they will need to make as they become postgraduate writers and eventually professional academics and writers.

Second, richly detailed accounts of the ways in which participants actively reinvented the places they worked, commuted and lived, and created writing spaces also index the significance of gender to the participants' academic writing practices. Indications that the necessity to reinvent places into writing spaces is gendered are signalled in the way that being a postgraduate research student was rarely about choosing or prioritising one key life role (like being a provider for a family). Lived experiences around writing as a postgraduate student demonstrate that individuals actively craft lives in which multiple, overlapping identities can be (and must be inhabited: for example, postgraduate research writer, as well as a mother and a carer - see, for example, Pippa, Jessica, Samantha and Cosima).

Finally, a key contribution made by this thesis and one which signals the gendered nature of writing as a postgraduate student – as indexed by participant accounts - can be seen in the ways that, for the women in the study, academic writing helped to bring about important changes, such as financial security, furthering a career after maternity leave, or crafting careers that brought a greater degree of intellectual fulfilment. These specific changes are often sought because of gendered life experiences, such as taking extended maternity leave, taking time off work as a mother of small children and needing to provide for children. Academic writing at postgraduate level, in this sense, is gendered and makes a significant contribution to life transitions and meaningful, and practical long-term changes for individuals and their families (See Chapter 6).

8.3.4 The value of ‘tales’

The use of writing tales to analyse and represent writing practices and experiences (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis) is a core concept which forms the basis for this study into postgraduate writing practices. Drawing on Lather’s tales (1991) in this way has allowed me (as the researcher) to provide detailed accounts of the lived experience of writing. It has also followed the ethnographic imperative by using interviews, field notes, images and texts to illuminate the reality of writing for individuals. This goal of representing contexts with more depth and breadth in language oriented research is not a new one. It is also not straightforward, in the sense that researchers always need to make decisions about delineating contexts. Writing tales, however, has allowed me to provide pictures of academic writing practices which are detailed and respectful of the people and authentic contexts in which writing takes place. This approach, too, has allowed me to provide commentary on the social structures and forces that underpin writing, in particular in relation to gender. The tales, as a methodological tool, have been proven to be useful and could be taken up in further research seeking to track writing practices in the formative years of students’ postgraduate journeys, or academic careers.

8.4 The limitations of the study

There are two key limitations of the study on which this thesis is based. Firstly, the sample sizes of both the postgraduate students involved and the number of written texts which could be collected were limited to 16 students and their corresponding texts. A broader-based study in terms of disciplines and institutions could have enabled a wider range of

texts and practices to be documented and could also have, potentially, illuminated differences between the institutional requirements and writing practices of different universities. Additionally, a study which explores the postgraduate academic writing practices in different countries and languages could increase the depth and breadth of outcomes in a similar way. Finally, a study which was able to collect texts at more points across the complete timespan of a research programme could offer a more comprehensive series of snapshots of the many different types of texts and practices in which postgraduate research students engage.

Secondly, an additional limitation is that the tales in *voice and the crafting of texts* were not able to systematically track the progression of texts as they were developed. There were, of course, connections between some of the documented texts but the postgraduate writers were not asked to volunteer different versions of the same text. Participants being asked to volunteer different versions of the same text, could have added an additional dimension to the study, that of the building of trajectories of texts across the postgraduate experience.

I will now discuss further research and the pedagogical implications of the outcomes of this study.

8.5 Further research

This thesis indicates three areas on which further research could usefully be carried out.

First, additional research would be valuable which builds on the findings from this study, by focusing on postgraduate writers as they move out of the formative years and into the final year of study and into the early stages of their careers. Making connections between the writing practices research students develop, and the writing they carry out as professional researchers or academics, could provide us with important information about academic writing practices that are sustainable, productive and recognised. For example, are there writing practices that were developed while individuals were research students that are particularly effective, when taken up as professional academic writers? Similarly, learning about some of the changes individuals make to their writing practices as they become professional academics could enhance understandings of the ways that academic writing develops for individuals when they are required to write more frequently in professional

contexts (for example, what are the elements of writing contexts which change over time and how do these changing contexts affect academic writing practices?).

Second, a study which expands on the number of participants, perhaps also involving students from a range of institutions, and one which increased the frequency with which written texts are collected, and the amount of texts collected could, potentially, provide a more detailed picture of differences between the writing practices of individuals, disciplinary areas and institutions.

Third, the importance of personal and professional changes that occur alongside and after individuals have written within research degrees has been discussed and explored in this thesis, but more work is to be done. For example, a year after Ellie's writing tale in Chapter 5 where she is anxious about sharing her writing, her writing journal (see Figure 4) reflects a woman full of intellectual ideas – a newly developing part of herself which she explains has an impact on her professional life: 'One thing which emerged in conversation last night is that I am becoming...not so much hyper-critical but very challenging in conversation. Or "argumentative" as John says' (January, 2013). Consequently, the impact of individuals gaining confidence in their ideas can go beyond the academic world, spill out beyond the context of writing and signal shifts in relationships which are gendered.

Fourth, there are a range of possibilities related to the use of the methodological tool of writing tales as a means of learning more about the writing practices of individuals and groups. Groups and individuals whose experiences of writing could be developed into tales include, for example, mature students returning to education, adult students of multiple languages, and individuals in minority or Indigenous communities transitioning to other communities for work or education. Tales offer much in terms of potentially providing a lens through which to understand the writing experiences of individuals, which in turn, has much to offer when strategies are sought to support specific groups. By attending to the diversity of academic writing experiences through the use of writing tales, researchers are acknowledging and valuing differences between the strategies and processes individuals use to write.

I will now briefly consider the main pedagogical implications of this thesis.

8.6 Pedagogical Implications

In terms of pedagogical implications, findings from the study point to four possible considerations for supervisors or tutors working to support postgraduate researchers' writing practices.

First, supervisors and writing tutors may benefit from taking more explicit account of both the occluded and institutionally visible texts research students are producing. This might be, for example, through explicit discussions of the intellectual value of writing a range of texts, and in a number of languages, as part of research writing activities in pedagogical forums. These forums might be, for example, writing tutorials or writing circles (for example, Aitchison, 2009). A finding of this study was that all of the participants, regardless of discipline, wrote, and valued occluded texts in the development of their research. Similarly, forums and professional relationships which support and inform postgraduates' writing practices, may benefit from discussions related to the different functions these occluded and visible texts perform for individuals, and the different disciplinary areas which find certain texts the most useful. Ongoing discussions and support around these different texts may, for example, enable students to make useful connections between different texts, allowing them to draw on aspects of certain texts while writing other; such connections may not always be obvious and only surface through discussions which include a range of text types.

Second, having a sense of the specific circumstances of a postgraduate student (for example, that she is a parent or carer) may enable a supervisor or advisor to offer writing support which is more tailored to those circumstances. To take Samantha as an example, her supervisor or tutor could potentially have engaged in discussions about the places, spaces and times Samantha had to write, and helped her to define the writing tasks which could be more easily carried out when she was caring for her child. The tutor could then also support her as she planned for the writing tasks which she could have carried out in quieter times when Samantha was alone.

Third, supervisors and writing tutors might usefully explore the moments when postgraduate writers feel compelled to write in particular ways, as illustrated in Cosima's tale with her repetition of 'I must' (see 7.5). Explorations of these postgraduate writer

perspectives have the potential to support individuals' writing practices and help individuals to further develop texts they are currently writing.

Finally, it is clear that discussions and talk around specific texts, as they are written, are potentially very important moments in postgraduate research students' writing of texts. Providing opportunities for such talk for example through forums (face to face or virtual) for research students to discuss potential audiences or develop specific strategies to move a text forward are clearly very important. Similarly, it is also important to acknowledge the significant role that supervisors, advisors and more senior academics (potentially) play in the shaping of the content, form and voices of postgraduates' texts in the formative years of research students' degrees. Throughout this study and the writing of this thesis it has been clear that structured discussions around the ways in which specific ideas are/can be built with regard to specific written texts are perceived as very valuable by many postgraduate student writers.

Final Personal Reflection: Falling back ‘in like’ with writing

There have been times when I have despised this thesis and have felt that it has sucked from me every available ounce of energy and spare minute I have – which I could have spent with my daughter. However, unexpectedly, as I get closer to the end, I find myself starting to fall ‘in like’ with it again. I am not resenting the time it takes and remembering that moments spent writing are also moments I have to myself, time when I can have a break from the endless cycle of work and caring for my family and others’ needs. The process of writing the thesis has been significant to me in this respect – it has forced me to constantly re-examine where I give my energies, how I spend my days – and how so much of my time is spent looking after others and carrying out the everyday roles and responsibilities that accompany being a ‘good’ mother, partner, sister, daughter and worker. The thesis has meant that even when times are difficult emotionally, or I am exhausted – I can turn to something meaningful, work that will hopefully, help me to continue to grow both professionally and personally. Not unlike many of the participants in this study, the thesis also gives me hope that one day the financial pressures of supporting myself and my daughter might become less burdensome, that - over the long term - I will build a sustainable career in which I am able to carry out fulfilling work while attending to my family’s needs. I think, through no one’s fault, I have been taught to support these activities in others, but rarely to do this for myself. In my experience, this is a gendered part of my life – I see this in many of the women in my world. I am grateful that this thesis – and my supervisors - have helped me to aspire to something different – something that adds to my daughter’s life and mine. As I continue on this journey, and I seek to publish based on the research presented in this thesis, this is one thing I hope not to forget – that working on this thesis – in addition to its small contribution to knowledge, has been a means of re-connecting me to myself and to my potential.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Email of invitation to participate in the postgraduate research writing study

Dear Student-Researcher

I'm a full-time research student from # researching academic literacies and writing in higher education (HE). My Supervisors are Dr Theresa Lillis, Dr Maria Rai and Dr Lucy Rai.

*I am researching **female students who are writing research** in a range of disciplines, from Social Sciences through to Science, Technology, Engineering or Manufacturing (STEM), in UK, HE.*

I'd be interested in hearing your ideas about writing at university, and I'd be happy to travel to a location convenient to you, at a time that suits you.

If you're interested, you'll be invited to bring a piece of your research-related writing to an interview on a day that suits you (your identity, and writing, will be kept confidential – see the attached Consent Form). This interview may be done over the phone, via Skype/video-conference or in person, depending on what is best for you (if we do the interview over the phone, I will ask you to email me your writing, but all reasonable precautions will be taken to keep your work confidential). The interview will take no more than one hour - and they often take as little as 30 minutes. In the interview, you'll be asked to talk about your own writing and experiences related to writing in HE

Once an academic year, you'll also be invited to write informal, diary-entries about your writing (over a period of 1 to 4 weeks - this is up to you). In these entries, you will reflect about on your writing practices in HE (you will be given a few questions to think about and they'll come from the questions asked in the interview), and, again, precautions will be taken to keep your identity confidential.

I will make sure that you volunteer no more than 3 hours, in total, every 6 months.

I hope you're able to consider participating, as the interviews, and short diary entries, have been designed with the intention of providing a space for you to reflect on your writing, and studies, in a relaxed and enjoyable way. In addition, many teachers, students and researchers argue that 'creating space' to reflect on 'writing' can positively affect the quality and productivity of one's 'writing'.

Again, if you choose to remain anonymous, precautions will be taken to ensure that your identity is kept confidential.

Any questions and enquiries are welcome. Feel free to contact me for an informal chat at ## or on ### or ### to discuss any aspect of this research.

Appendix 1 continued**Invitation to participate in academic writing research study**

I am supervising a PhD research study by Jenny McMullan into the academic writing experiences and practices of women researchers engaged in postgraduate study. This work is part of a growing area of research, broadly referred to as 'Academic Literacies', which seeks to explore the nature of academic writing in the twenty first century including the different ways in which people approach and engage in academic writing. To date, little research has focused specifically on the perspectives of women postgraduate researchers on the academic writing they do as part of their research and study. Jenny McMullan's work will therefore make an important contribution to this field and I am sure will be of great interest to you should you decide to participate in her study, further details of which you will find in the attached letter.

I therefore hope you will consider being a participant. If you have any general queries or concerns about this study please contact me, #. For all specific details about participating, please contact Jenny directly (her details are in the attached letter).

Yours sincerely

Dr. Theresa Lillis, Senior Lecture, Centre for Language and Communication. The Open University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ther Lillis', with a long, sweeping horizontal line above it.

Appendix 2: Schedule of questions

Interview Schedule

Questions used for the ‘Talk-and-Text’ Interviews

Before each interview begins the researcher opens the interview with the following statement. I understand that many of your answers may relate to specific writing studies, so wherever possible, it would be good if you could try to give an example related to your answer. If there is a particular question you would not like to answer, just let me know and we will move on. Thanks for participating.

Getting to know the participant and opening the discussion (briefly getting to know the person and introducing the topic for discussion).

Thank you very much for coming today. Could you please tell me your name, date-of-birth and preferred contact details? Could you also tell me what languages you speak and your nationality? Would you like to comment on your ethnicity or religion? (The interviewer will refer back to the invitation letter to demonstrate that the candidate will remain anonymous if she chooses).

Location, space, time

Could you describe the places you write? What do they look like? Why do you write there?

Are there people around you when you write? Where? How?

Could you give a couple of examples of how ‘writing’ fits in to a normal day for you?

Do you write in short bursts or longer sustained periods? Are you able to describe any patterns like this in the ways that you write?

Memories of writing or literacy history

Could you give a brief overview of where you went to school and college or university? Could you give an example of a positive and/or negative experience you had at school related to reading or writing?

Do you remember any particular experiences, related to reading or writing, when you were at home as child or young adult? Could you share a couple of your memories?

Do you feel that your current home-life, relationships, or friendships have an impact on your writing at university? Could you give a couple of examples?

Have you written personally, or creatively? Could you give some examples of times in your life when you have done this and what this type of writing has meant to you?

Could you tell me a little bit about your specific journey into university, and into research? How have you come to be a student-researcher? Could you comment, generally, on the way writing has, or has not, affected that journey?

Is there anything you would like to add, or write, related to the things we have talked about? Feel free to take a few minutes to gather your thoughts.

Writing in Academia and Student Writing – references will be made to actual written texts

1. Writing as craft.

Could you say a few words about the practical things you do when writing for, and in, university? For example, what kind of practical steps do you take to craft your original ideas into the final stages of an essay, or article, for example?

2. The Research tradition.

Do you consider yourself to belong to a research tradition of some kind? Could you explain a little?

If relevant, can you give a couple examples of specific writing traditions or 'rules' in your 'academic' area? Are there rhetorical features and textual strategies mark your work as scientific or academic? Could you give a couple of examples? What do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of these 'traditions' or 'rules'?

Are there specific academic debates or arguments that inform your discipline? If so, can you give an example of how you show these in your writing? Does this present any challenges or problems for you? If so, why?

3. The nature of reality: Issues of epistemology and ontology.

Are notions of 'reality' and 'truth' dealt with in your writing in any way? Can you give one or two examples of how these ideas about reality are represented in the text?

Do you experience any difficulties or challenges when writing about issues related to reality and truth? Why?

Can you give examples?

4. Aesthetics or 'creativity'.

What creative, aesthetic or artistic considerations do you think are appropriate in terms of the subject domain you are writing?

Do you consider yourself creative in the way you write? What factors affect how 'creative' you feel you can be? Why?

5. Who is in the text? Self and other.

Do you consider yourself to be in your writing in any way (this could relate to the notion of 'voice' or 'author')? If so, how? Can you give a couple of examples?

Do you feel there are any challenges or tensions around how you express yourself in your writing at university? Why?

Would you like to comment on any aspect of the way that you write about 'yourself' or 'another' in your academic writing? Can you give an example?

6. Politics and participation.

Do you feel that your writing may have an impact on the lives of others in any way? If so, how? Could you give an example/s?

7. Gender. In terms of your academic writing while pursuing a research qualification, do you feel that gender has been significant in any way?

Is there any other comment you would like to make at all about what we have discussed?

Appendix 3: An example transcript of an interview

C and J Interview

Transcription July =2011

Transcription key

[?] indistinct/inaudible

... words have been taken out of the extract because of repetition or redundancy

[] Words added to the transcript to summarise a point made, or to add background information.

Fillers like 'um' 'ah' etc. were not transcribed

Standard punctuation was used to reflect natural pauses and improve the readability of the excerpts.

[J says hello, thanks C and they begin the interview]

J: Thank you so much for sending me the writing. I found it really interesting, the reflective piece of writing.

C: I'm glad you found it interesting

J: We'll just to start at the beginning. [J explains she might get C to explain things again].

J: Could you tell me, just briefly, a little bit about how you moved through school, secondary school and into university. Basically how you came to be in, doing research in HE? Could you tell me a little bit about that to begin with?

C: Yes, sure. Well, I'm Italian, so I did my elementary, middle and high school and university in Italy. During university I did the Erasmus exchange programme in the UK, and then after I finished university and I studied Political Science which in Italy is a kind of a weird degree because it's a mix of economics, law, history, statistics and political science and lots of other things. So after that I did a Masters in International Relations at Reading and I was physically there and after that I went back to Italy and I started working. Then, because I was working, instead of working in my field in international relations or history I worked more in E Learning which in the time in Italy in 1988/1999 - in Italy - was really just starting, and I thought well since I'm working in a field that is very new, well maybe I should try and study about this field and learn some more and that's how I decided to enrol in a course at USE. So I did my first course, in I think it was is, oh, I can't remember exactly, but it was one of the postgraduate courses that are part of the Masters that are online in distance education, so I did the first course and I continued working, then, in 2004 I moved to Australia and since I was, I couldn't really find a full-time job, and I was expecting a baby so I was home a lot of the time so I said well, 'why don't I just do another course so at least I learn a bit more'. I did my second course and then we moved to Cyprus and again the same thing. I wanted to try and finish the Masters, really, and since it's quite easy to just keep studying at USE because of the, because I didn't have to go anywhere, well I was already somewhere, but I stayed in Australia and Cyprus for a limited period of time, so there's not enough time to enrol in a, you know in a full-time class, course, so I ended up finishing the Masters. So when I finished the Masters, I thought well, why don't I try and apply for the EdD. Again, the main reason is that I wanted to have, to pursue, a research degree and I couldn't really do it in a physical place because I wasn't staying anywhere long enough to

do that and also I like studying the field of education, so I applied for the first time in 2009 and they said 'no'. Then I applied again in 2010 and they said 'yes'.

J: Why did they say no again, just out of curiosity? Cause you seemed like you'd be over-qualified to me?

C: That's nice of you to say that, well I thought I was alright, but they said that first of all my proposal and the topic of my research is 'history' like 'digital history' – 'how history is taught and researched online'. So the first time they said that I had not shown that I was able to really contact the experts that I want to contact for my research and so I needed to contact some of the experts before sending my proposal to show that I was able to really talk to them during the project, which I thought it was, not a very strong point because still now I'm not that sure yeah, I have contacted a few. I know they will answer, but I can't really ask people to sign with their blood, they will answer me or they will accept and interview. So I thought that was a little e bit weird umm and the other reason, I can't remember exactly. I didn't feel it was very strong, at the same time, I have to admit that my proposal in 2010 was much better than the proposal in 2009, so maybe it was just, you know, all he said was that the proposal was not up to the standard. And then I received a comment, you know - off the record - from a former tutor saying, oh, you know, they do that because of funding, because if you are not from the UK it's harder to accept you the first time because [?] I don't know what that was about, but, in 2010 my proposal was accepted, so I started working on the doctorate in mid-May 2010. Ok.

J: That's fantastic. There's two questions I have which I find quite interesting. First of all, was it – why were you moving around so much, was it, were you following your partner's career or, is it just a personal thing?

C: No No it's my husband's fault. No yes, we were, still are, following his his job.

J: Ok Ok and the other question I had is, umm, so did you end up, am I correct in understanding that you finished two Masters degrees. Is that right? I think that is quite common *etc.* [J asks C to go back to the topic of research to clarify and says] so as far as I understand it, it's a kind of a, you're looking at digital history and you're kind of looking at it in a, but I'm not quite sure that you mean, you are tracing the evolution of the digital environment, or your doing that and looking at how one might teach history in a digital environment. Which one is more correct?

C: I would say the second one.

J: Ok. Right.

C: So my interest is, ok there are two things. First of all, my main interest is in history, more than education, but there is no online history [?] anywhere, so, if I hadn't had the chance to do a history PhD or doctorate, rather than an Education doctorate, I would have preferred to do a history doctorate and trying to see how the discipline of the History, and the historians, work with the online environment, from the point-of-view of the discipline in history, rather than the point-of-view of the discipline of education, because I want to be a historian, not so much a [?]. But that's the situation, so still I try to look at it from a historian's point-of-view, so how the profession is changing, how the points of view are changing, how umm the work of the historian is changing. It is, after because of the digital tools, because of the Internet, because of the social network, because of everything that is available and can be done through the Internet.

J: Ok, I'm just thinking as well, it's making me wonder about the kind of, the different, literacy requirements there are, perhaps when one studies pure history, or one studies in a

kind of a more inter-disciplinary way, like when we study education, do you find there's different demands on you in terms of writing, in those two different areas.

C: Yes, umm, well there are a lot of differences of course in method as well, and the research itself is usually, historians don't get to interview people, because they're usually dead [?]. Of course there's a big part of, you know, oral history and some parts of contemporary history where you can, you know you get to interview and real people sometimes, very rarely and also the, I think the main difference for me is not so much the disciplines, history versus education in the way that I have to write but for me the biggest obstacle is the way that I would write ah research if I were in Italy and the way that research that needs to be written in the UK, because they are different. Of course, you know the basic requirements are the same, you know, you have to write something that is clear and precise and you have to have the sources right and you have to present the sources in a meaningful and correct way, so the ground rules are the same. You know the [?] methods are the same, but in Italy we write differently, so for me every time I have to write something, just to have an idea of what I want to write, and then I have to go over it again to check if I'm writing it for Italy - a hypothetical Italian reader - or if I'm writing it as I should for a supervisor in the UK. And I always have to do that, and I've always had to do that when I was doing the Erasmus project, when I was doing the Masters at Reading, or the previous courses at the USE. I always had to do that because if I don't and it, disaster strikes. I remember once in the (ok that was not research writing, that was just a paper) for a course, but when I was doing the Masters at Reading, I wrote a paper about the, I think the topic was how the Nation State came to be in Europe and the lecturer - who is an amazing lecturer - and he knows everything, almost, and most of all he knows the difference, he knows very well the difference between writing in Italy and writing in the UK,

so he gave me, I think it was a 57. I was not very happy with and he said, 'Look this is, if we were in Italy this would be excellent, but we're not so re-write it'. So I went back, I re-wrote it, I didn't look at the sources again, I didn't have to check my facts again, I didn't have to, you know, go to the papers again, I just had to re-write it in the way that was acceptable in the UK.

J: So, really it was mainly a question of style.

C: Style and, especially, the presentation of the sources and the quotations.

J: Could you tell me, I know it's getting technical but I find that quite interesting, could you tell me a little bit more, give me a couple of examples of the differences?

C: Yes, first of all, most of academic writing, especially in history, in Italy is, can be, more evocative than it is allowed in the UK, so you can write maybe an opening paragraph that, as I said that evolves an idea or a context or, that is not really terribly relevant maybe to your argument, but it's kind of, it's more literary than scientific and that's usually allowed. You can start with like a beautiful opening sentence, that maybe doesn't really, you know have a lot of relevance for what you want to say, but if it looks beautiful, if it's evocative, it's kind of, you know, it gives the reader a feeling of what you want to communicate. It's ok and then afterwards you can start with the hard facts or with a [?]. Or for instance we use a lot more quotations and we use longer quotations in Italy, so if you find something that someone else said, and you think it's appropriate than you can just put like the whole paragraph, just move onto the next topic.

J: mm

C: You can just you know call the authority and so ok, this is what this person said you know he's right, or she's right, so what more should I say? That's it.

J: Would you not have to draw that out or explain that in your own words as much as you would here do you think?

C: No

J: Ok, I get it.

C: It's more, it's not you know, you can't just quote everything, but it's allowed much more than in the UK so you can say, 'look this is what is the authority on the topic says, so why should I even bother trying to re-write it, that's it, that's what you want to know. My job was to find the quotation that applies to this case and I can just move on to the next one, so I tend to write long quotations. I tend to use the authority of my literature much more than I should. And, again, usually, you're not really expected to write and sometimes, it's really forbidden, in a way, to write what you think. Never ever ever start a sentence with, 'my view of this topic is that', 'my view of this issue' or 'my research leads to these conclusions', no, no, no, no, that's not, maybe after you have a PhD, if you write a paper, after you have a PhD than, yes, you can start.

J: You have that flexibility.

C: But up to when you have a research degree in your hands, it's not really encouraged, you know this kind of language is really not very, terribly ok. So for me it's always hard, my Supervisor says usually every time, that I need to use 'I' because that's what I'm doing, but I find it really really hard because that's not what I am comfortable with. And it's easier you know when you're writing an essay for like a Master degree, it's not your research, so it's

not that necessary, but if you're writing about your research and what you're doing, of course you have to put yourself at the forefront of the writing because it's your writing, your research. But it's a very different style that is required in Italy, so, but I don't have a research degree from Italy, but I've worked in an academic environment in Italy for a long time so, of course, and actually in Italy, not any more now, but when I graduated for the undergraduate degree you had to write a thesis, a long thesis, like my thesis was 300 pages, but there was, I consider that a piece of research as well.

J Yeah yeah

C: But in that case I don't think I ever ever used the pronoun 'I' -- ever.

J: mm gee that's really interesting

C: [?]

J: Yeah, well, you've already explained it a little bit but what's come to my mind is, you know how some people describe how much of themselves they can put in their writing, or how much of their own 'voice'. I guess 'voice' is the best way to, I'm not talking about necessarily just using 'I', but I mean, I'm talking about does your writing reflect 'you', you know your 'inner voice'. Do you feel that you can get closer to that in Italian, or that you can get closer to that in English, or it doesn't matter, or it changes?

C: It, well, I definitely, well I, in English I'm expected to do that, to attempt to do that. While in Italy, that's considered not 'ok'. The, I'm not sure how, well in Italy the research training is nearly nonexistent for my field at least, so it's very hard to compare because even the PhD students get almost zero research training. They just write their thesis, and they discuss of course with their supervisor, but more the topic than the methods, so it's hard to

compare. Of course in the UK there's a lot methods, maybe even more than the topic itself. Sometimes it's hard to compare, but it's definitely, well in Italy, what you're supposed to present is the research. The researcher is in the background. I'm talking about my field, so history, international relations, political science. It's not for everything, but it's just my experience. So you present your work and your work should speak for itself or whatever it's worth and that's it, your voice is not really necessary, it's not what [?] is required, so for me it's very hard sometimes to work on, you know, as you were saying making my own 'voice' come out of the work because I'm always worried: Why should I say it, is it too much? Just to give you an example, I was last year, I was doing a course, I was teaching a course on, more or less on what I'm studying so that the methodologies and the tools for the historians that can be found and used online through the Internet and computers etc. and I was talking to the students about, also, because they, especially undergraduate students, as I said they really never get training on how to write the dissertation even when they want to write it cause they now they don't have to, but even when they want to write it they don't really have to, so any explanation. So the students wanted to know how to write and I was saying, 'ok, you have to have you know a really good structure. You have to plan blah blah blah'. And then I was saying, I wanted to say that, and I was on Skype and the professor I work with was in the room with the students and I said something like, 'Then I have to tell you a few things about the Conclusion'. And when I stopped talking the Professor said, 'You are not allowed to write any conclusions because you're just undergraduate students. So you're not supposed to be able to draw any conclusions from anything. Just report'.

J: That was in Italy?

C: Yes. Yeah. So you can basically report what you've found out and present it nicely as I said in a beautiful literary fashion, but you can not draw conclusions. Your conclusions are not of any interest to any one [?]. What would you know?

J: mm mm

C: And that's what he said.

J: That's really interesting.

C: After you have your PhD. Then you're allowed to draw conclusions.

J: Yeah yeah

C: So I don't agree but that's where I come from

J: Ok, that's very very interesting. So you are constantly kind of treading two lines, yeah umm that's really interesting, can we change track for a little but, because I want to go back a little bit to what is called memories of writing and literacy history, because you are making me think about what they may have meant for you growing up, initially. What's one of the, if you think back to perhaps primary school or high school or your home environment when you were a child, what are a couple of memories that come to mind when you think about reading and writing?

C: That's a tough one.

J: [laughs]

C: Well I love reading, so when I had to move I had like twenty-five boxes of books in four different languages, so that's kind of crazy, it's out of control, so I've always liked reading,

ah writing as well, not that I write anything of very high quality but I've always liked to read and write.

J: Actually I've noticed that somewhere I read about your wiki and your blog, was that just for the subject, or do you keep a blog anyway?

C: Umm, I tried to, but I'm not very umm, I'm not very constant in doing that so I [?] probably had a research blog, also for, like a research diary for the doctorate, but I never really use it.

J: Yeah. I know the feeling.

C: Because I have so little time that I don't have the time to reflect, to write about my reflections, I just have to, I mean I barely get through the day

J: I understand yeah.

C: I kept a personal blog when we were in Cyprus.

J: ok

C: But there was, because I had like I was in a foreign country, I mean most people speak English in Cyprus, but not everybody and not very well, and, I had a 18-month-old and a newborn baby and I was by myself.

J: Oh, you're amazing. Oh my goodness.

C: but with my husband, but he was working like 12 hours a day.

J: Yeah yeah

C: Yeah and there's no support, no parents' association, no nothing zero, so at that time I really felt it was good when I was able to finally put both of them to bed or they were maybe playing for five minutes by themselves. At that time, I really liked having a chance to write a few things, just a few thoughts that came to my mind, so I did that for about a year and that was it.

J: Gee, that's really interesting and do you, that makes me think about umm something that's common for many women and some men, is juggling parenthood with studying. Can you tell me a little bit about your thoughts on that and what that experience has been like for you?

C: ouch.

J: Yeah, I know.

C: Well, it was definitely easier, first of all it was easier when I only had one and of course it was easier when I was doing coursework, cause then you have your assignments and you know, you finish your assignments, you know what you're supposed to do and du du du du du, and that was hard but not too bad. Now, it's really difficult because just, I have time, but have short amounts of time, and I find that is really really bad for working with research because sometimes you just have to think or you just have to go through the papers and have a look here, have a look there, and maybe after two hours, you haven't written anything, and you haven't discovered anything but the time that you spend just looking around the literature, going back to one article and looking for something on the Web. Overall then it gives you, you know you're going forward, but I never had, I don't know maybe one day I will, I don't know, I feel like I need like five hours in a row.

J: Yes

C: And I never get that so I have hours here and there, cause the kids go to childcare and so on. It's not like I am not able to breathe, but I never have like, and that's also about working from home, or like studying or researching from home, that I'm never really just doing that because, I guess I'm reading an article, and like, 'Oh I need to go and do laundry' or 'Oh, the phone rings' and then, 'oh my god. I have to prepare dinner'. So, overall I use the 15, 16, 17 hours a week [?] is that enough, but it's better than nothing [?].

J: It's good yeah.

C: But it's not like four hours in a row. Maybe one hour one day and maybe two hours Saturday evening and maybe half an hour Monday morning and it's really really hard, so I'm always almost beyond, sometimes I'm beyond the deadline and that really really hurts my writing because, especially because I'm a foreigner, because I [?] come from a different world. I really need to write and then let the piece of writing rest for a little bit and then come back to it later, but I very very rarely get to do that because I usually write, you know, 'I've got 20 minutes. Oh my god'.

J: Yeah yeah yeah. I understand completely.

C: So it was easier for the Masters because you know you have to write the essay, you have to write the essay and then that's gone and that's fine. You know if it's a limited amount of work and you know what you are supposed to do. But, research, I don't exactly know what I have to do. It's not an essay question, so it's really, yes, I, I should really take the computer, go to Starbucks. Ewh, no not Starbucks, go to the library, somewhere and pretend I'm in an office.

J: mm

C: Whatever, I don't know anything about the washing machine, anything about cooking, cleaning or I don't know. [?] I'm away [?].

J: That's extremely interesting. Could you just describe, just briefly your physical space that you usually work in? Is there one space that you work in at home?

C: I usually work at home, and most of the times, either here or in the living room. [shows J on SKYPE camera] or I move to the kitchen. I have a desk but it's not just for me, so, like my, research things are not located in one spot. I have to take them out and then put them away and that also doesn't help, because by the time I spread, you know [?] just to have a look at them, it's time to, you know, and then I have to put them away and then I don't, maybe, I spend like half an hour putting them in a position where I can follow some ideas and then I have to put them away in the drawer and I lose that

J: trajectory

C: so I don't have a space for my research

J: I understand

C: I have all the equipment I need, you know, I have computer, I have electricity, I have the Internet, but I don't have my own spot [?]

J: Do you feel like your friends and family support what you do?

C: Um, that's a tough one.

J: You don't have to answer that.

C: No no no, I'm fine, my husband supports me in the sense that he really wants me to be happy and to, you know, to find what I want to do, which is really nice. I feel the love. But

from a practical point-of-view ah not exactly. Well sometimes he asks, 'oh, how's your doctorate going?'. I don't know, I'm not following it exactly, I know it is going somewhere [?], but I don't know where it is. So I I, emotionally I feel supported.

J: Yes

C: But from a practical point-of-view, not so much.

J Yeah yeah, I understand.

C: Because when he did his PhD he was getting up in the morning. Now he wasn't living at home but [?] he was going to the lab, working and then coming home. And he doesn't really get how hard it is to [?]

J: manage both

C: So emotionally I feel very supported. My kids [?] especially because they really want, because you know they think that. I've done you know, a few jobs, a few things around in the various countries, but they feel I've always been way over-qualified and then you know I'm wasting my talents, they want to, emotionally they really want me to finish these and to find a very nice job, maybe to work in research as well, but from a practical point-of-view, again, comes this six-thirty in the evening, [?]: 'Are you there?' 'Are you there?' 'We want to see kids' 'We want to show something to the', so, as I said, emotionally and psychologically I feel that really everybody wants the best for me, practically.

J: Yeah I understand completely, yeah, I mean I was, managed to get some funding so I can turn my study into a full-time job, I still feel as though I'm juggling two full-time jobs, with my little girl and my studies, so I empathise.

C: I think you are definitely.

[They laugh]

J: How old are your children again?

C: six and four and a half.

J: My little girl is two.

C: Well they come more independent.

J: yes yes they tell me, lots of people say, four is quite a good age to start getting on with things um for yourself. Well see, fingers crossed. [laughs] But I don't want to wish the time away I love it [?].

C: No no no, between two and four, well every time is wonderful, but, they just start becoming little interactive things – who can talk and it's wonderful.

J: Ok that's been incredibly interesting and very helpful. I'm just having a quick look through my questions now to see if there's anything that we haven't actually covered. There is one actually, [?] it is a little bit abstract but I thought it might be interesting to ask you. I don't know if you've thought about it. I just wanted to think a little bit about this idea of epistemology and ontology – the way that reality and truth is dealt with in research and writing, so many people don't start to think about this until the end. Some people think about it all the way through umm some people think about it without even doing research. Do you have any thoughts on that? Like um, basically, dealing with issues of reality and truth in your writing and in the particular area that your researching at the moment. Does

that, do you ever think about that, does it come into anything that you do, or is it not there at the moment?

C: Well, umm, I don't know if this is exactly what you're asking but um I've been thinking about ah theory a lot, a way, because I'm trying to read umm a few things from both angles so from a social science perspective and from a history perspective, because, you know, historians are never supposed to try and find the truth. Because especially after postmodernism, so we, as historians, we tend to assume that there is a truth of historical events and cause and consequence but we're not able to find the whole truth, ever, so, you know, the only thing we can find is, you know, plausible connections and descriptions and accurate [?], accurate descriptions and ideas about cause and consequence and connections between things but never the truth.

J: Yes.

C: But I, and then I'm not sure how the, and it's a little bit hard because my ideas was to, because there is really no theory in digital history, there is very very little, because when historians work with digital history they don't usually try to write a theory on digital history because they don't want to be, in a way, involved in writing theory because they know as a historian you're not supposed to write theory, so there's very little, my idea was you know, ok, why don't I try and use grounded theory as a method for my research, since there is, I still don't know a lot about grounded theory.

J: I don't know who does.

C: Yes, ok. [?] There is no theory so you need to go from the data and let the theory emerge from the data, but then I'm always in the [?] because what theory, because if I write something that [?]. If I attempt to write a theory on digital history that I know that

historians would not really like that and if I write a theory like a social science theory on digital history then I wonder whether I'm losing the perspective of the historian and then if any historian ever reads my research maybe they will not find anything interesting. Maybe they will think, you know, it's like some doctoral research in lab rats [?], but I don't want to be a rat. I'm a historian. I don't know if that is

J: No, that's very – that's exactly what I was asking. I mean these things are really just a series of questions we ask ourselves in many ways, I don't know if we come up with absolutes about this. Um that's really really interesting and have you been asked to write about that at all? Or is that just something that's come up in the background with your reading?

C: It's ah, I mean for the moment, I'm still, you know, having my feet into two separate [?] so umm I'm talking about the topic and then I'm saying, you know next [?] and saying your next paragraph, 'I'm going to use Grounded Theory. Ok thank you very much Goodbye. See you in [?]' And but I'm still trying to

J: Bring the two together

C: Also my problem is maybe a trivial thing, but I would like my work to be recognised as something that might have a little bit of value for historians, so for me it's also a problem of legitimisation in a way, but I have to write something that will get me through the Ed D.

J: Yes of course

C: And I know I will not have any historians at the viva, but I will have social scientists, so I've always wondered you know what can I do to write something for historians and maybe

acceptable as a piece of research for historians, but at the same time, I have some requirements that I really need to fulfill to be able to get the doctorate [laughs]

J: Yes, I understand completely.

C: Because I'm paying for it. So I'm never really, and it's also a huge cultural problem because in the UK and in the US historians are not afraid to talk about the methods and to discuss different theoretical perspectives from their point of view, so in the UK anglo-saxon world, I can find a lot of debates about postmodernism and the linguistic turn and the cultural turn and so on and so forth. In Italy it's really hard to ask a historian, ok, what is your theoretical perspective? What is your point-of-view? Because they always, because we still have, very polarised um frame of mind so historians in Italy are either Marxist or non-Marxist, still like [?]. So you're supposed to know from a historian from what he or she write from her or his perspective, you're supposed to just understand.

J: Yes, I understand, yeah.

C: You don't usually go to a historian and say, ok, are you Marxist? Or are you, you know? Because they think they're not supposed to show it ah very clearly so you're supposed to understand from their writing

J: context

C: what their position is, so they're not supposed to say, ok, this is my point-of-view. This is my perspective [?].

[J and C finalise the interview and say goodbye]

Appendix 4: An extract from an email responding to an ethics panel and defending the choice to investigate women's writing practices and experiences

Target – please ensure that there are no ethical issues around targeting women in your research.

An extract from Jenny McMullan's response:

Of course there are similarities between all students' experiences in HE, but there can also be differences, and it is important to investigate how coming to terms with these differences might support teaching and learning [with regard to academic literacies and academic writing practices].

An example of how a woman's experiences in HE might be different to that of a man is one of a PhD student who has particular responsibilities (like being the primary care-giver in the bringing-up of children). In this sense, navigating the landscape, and managing the demands, of higher education (of which writing is an essential part) may present particular challenges and tensions. In addition, bias in Western higher education towards a rhetorical 'binary framework' that undervalues traditionally feminine traits such as 'evocation' and personal voice, and highly values rhetoric which is impersonal, linear, direct and 'formal' (Lillis, 2001, p. 115) may also generate obstacles for some women when writing. These notions, combined with many of the every-day challenges many women encounter as a result of 'the restrictions placed on (them) by other family members, in terms of time and space' are indicative of many of the 'struggles surrounding women's participation in higher education' (Lillis, 2001, p.113). Finally, a focus on women may also be justified in that some education-related research has discussed the positive impact of parental involvement on pupil achievement (see Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003, for a review) and strands of this research have shown that parental involvement is, amongst other variables, 'strongly influenced by...maternal level of education' (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003,p.4).

It is in this 'constructive' and 'positive' spirit that this particular study seeks to target women - not in one that seeks to undermine or disadvantage male students, but one where the progress of all students is of paramount importance. It is only that this 'progress', in the view of this researcher, is best supported if the experiences of all students, including women, are represented and given a 'voice'. It is important to emphasise that this does not mean that male students would not benefit from research into academic literacy research targeted specifically at men.

However, in terms of the resources available, it is not within the scope of this research study to respond to this demand. (For research that is male or masculinities focused and aims to investigate men's participation in education see Archer, Pratt and Phillips, 2001 and Kahn, Brett

and Holmes, 2011 and for a discussion on the 'boy-turn' in school level literacy education in the US and Australia see Weaver-Hightower, 2003.)

Appendix 5: Certificate from HREC confirming ethics approval granted



From Dr Duncan Banks
Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee
Email d.banks@open.ac.uk
Extension 59198

To Jennifer McMullan, FELS/CREET
Subject 'Women's Writing and Widening Participation in Higher Education in the UK.'
Ref HREC/2011/#907/2
Red form n/a
Submitted 3 March 2011
Date 17 March 2011

The Open University

Memorandum

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, is approved by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Please make sure that any question(s) relating to your application and approval are sent to Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk quoting the HREC reference number. We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible so that your research is not delayed in any way.

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Regards,

Duncan Banks
Chair OU HREC

Appendix 6: Participant consent form

Participant Consent Form

Further analysis of postgraduate students' experiences of writing

If you are willing to take part in this research study please tick the box, complete the details below and return the signed form. At any time during the research you are free to withdraw and to request the destruction of any data that have been gathered from you, up to the point at which data are aggregated for analysis.

Your participation or non-participation will not affect your access to tutorial support or the results of your assessments.

The results of any research study involving # students constitute personal data under the Data Protection Act. They will be kept secure and not released to any third party. All data will be destroyed once the study is complete.

I am willing to take part in this research, and I give my permission for the data collected to be used in an anonymous form in any written reports, presentations and published papers relating to this study. My written consent will be sought separately before any identifiable data are used in such dissemination.

Signing this form indicates that you understand the purpose of the research, as explained in the covering letter, and accept the conditions for handling the data you provide.

Please tell me the best way to contact you to arrange a time and date for this interview, could you include full details eg, full telephone number or email address:

Name:

(please print)

Signed:.....

Date:

Please return completed form to:

For any enquiries please contact ###

Ethics Approval Certificate

Appendix 7: An extract of an institutional document which outlines the requirements a 'Probation Report' at USE

All Research Degree students are required to undertake a probationary review before their registration can be confirmed and they can progress to the second (full-time) / third (part-time) year of their studies.

Details about the probation process are in the Student Handbooks. ARCs are required to inform students about the probation assessment requirements at the beginning of their registration. The process is initiated by a mailing from the Research Degrees office to prompt the necessary actions. Students and supervisors should work together to plan and carry out the probation assessment in line with the timetable above.

Students who fail to meet the required academic standards will be de-registered, or may choose to withdraw. Students who fall just short of the required academic standards may be given a short period to undertake remedial action. At the end of this period the supervisors should inform the Associate Dean (Research) or ARC Research Degree co-ordinator of the outcome of the remedial work, for onward communication to the Research Degrees Office.

The probation benchmarks to be achieved and evidenced are:

The student:	Assessment
<p>Must submit a study report which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> └ A viable research question └ A critical literature review which situates the proposed research └ A research proposal, including an outline of proposed method(s), a critical justification for them, and where appropriate, preliminary data and analysis; └ A work plan for the study with a detailed timetable of dates for completion of component parts and thesis submission. 	<p>Supervisors must evaluate the report and indicate whether or not each element meets the required standard. If there is any shortfall, supervisors must state what must be rectified in order to pass probation.</p> <p>ARC Research Degree Co-ordinators should include a copy of the student's study report with this form.</p>
<p>Must provide a concise summary of their skills audit, training, including avoidance of plagiarism and development undertaken.</p>	<p>Supervisors must evaluate the skills audit and indicate whether sufficient progress has been made. If there is any shortfall, supervisors must state what must be rectified before probation can be passed.</p>

Must give an oral presentation of their research in a public forum such as a Research Centre or Department seminar.	Supervisors must confirm that the student has given an oral presentation of a satisfactory standard.
Must pass a mini-viva – an oral examination on the study report	The assessors must provide a written report evaluating the student's performance and recommending one of the possible outcomes. If the student has not met expectations, they should explain what is required for the student to successfully complete their probation. If the student has met expectation it is also acceptable for the assessors to provide constructive feedback as to how the student could progress with their research.

Mini viva assessment

The mini-viva assessment is an oral examination on the study report, conducted by at least two experienced academic researchers who are not the student's supervisors, nor third party monitor, and who can provide a view that is independent of the student's research group.

The form of the mini-viva may vary; some faculties or ARCs structure it along the lines of a PhD defence; others may have review panels or committees. Whatever the form, the focus of the discussion is on the student's research skills and progress so far, as reflected by the probation report. It is the expectation that the mini-viva assessment will be led by the independent members of the panel. A supervisor may be in attendance as an observer.

Ethical review

All students must consider and discuss with their supervisor whether their research requires ethical review. If it does:

- Directly supported students should have applied for ethical review and have been granted an Ethics Committee reference number **by the time of the probationary review**.
- ARC students must provide evidence to USE that their study has obtained ethical approval from the relevant body **in time for their probationary review at the latest**. If this is not provided, the student will not be permitted to progress to the next year of registration and will be required to withdraw.

Appendix 8: Full list of comments in order as they appear on Ellie's informed consent text

- These are rhetorical statements which needs embedding in the literature. As X has suggested, they need introducing as part of an overall argument
- You need to signpost where you are going with this. You are perhaps setting up a straw man in which all 'medical' researchers are 'bad'
- I would challenge that! There is vast body of literature concerned with research ethics in the social sciences
- Is this a 'historical argument? If so it is perhaps only one Of manyviewpoints.
- Careful with style. You are perhaps over-claiming here.
- You need to make the link explicit to Humphries etc here – how does this follow your views about the three 'social science' examples here
- You need to be much more circumspect in your arguments. Which ethical frameworks? Are they drawn entirely from medical ethics? What about arguments that these provide an important framework for protecting participants?
- Say where you got this definition from. The idea that informed consent is a 'one off' (rather than on-going and with the implications for participation changing and evolving over the course of the research project seems dated t me. This claim needs to take account of recent developments (inc within Feminist research on 'an ethic of care')
- See X's comment anon1. How does this fit with your argument? re. informed consent (and capacity to consent?)
- I think this could be rephrased; it's a little unclear
- The narrative has moved too quickly from a critique of informed consent, to informed consent in participatory research. The former requires a more detailed discussion, with greater referencing.
- Not sure it brings in other definitions; rather it seems to open up a discussion about the assumptions underpinning definitions of consent – such as competence and the ability to communicate in particular ways.
- References?
- I see where you're coming from, but I'm not sure how useful it is to conflate these two issues at this point.
- Also, this argument presupposes that consent is based upon western bio-medical assumptions about functional notions of capacity (I think Wong has written a useful critique about consent and capacity from this perspective). If you problematise what capacity is (and thus who can give consent and how), then it's possible to argue that someone with a learning difficulty might be capable of giving consent in particular contexts. So it doesn't

necessarily negate the label...rather, it highlights the ways in which learning disability and the capacity to consent might be produced and lived socially/relationally/culturally.

- Truman sounds interesting, but it would be useful to present arguments/critiques from the wider literature too.
- I would be more circumspect in our argument here and draw on the extensive literature on social research ethics (which might include the work of ethics committees e.g. Gabb, 2008) you are setting yourself up (potentially!) as the 'heroic researcher'
- Define 'bio-ethics' and critique Truman. Are ethics committees founded on such principles? Evidence?
- That is interesting and counter to most Social Science ethical frameworks – e.g. BSA (although not sure whether it is relevant here?)
- Are these your conjectures, or do they emerge from the literature? This kind of statement needs to be firmly underpinned by what you've read.
- There has been a lot of subsequent discussion, with less extreme examples.
- It would also be useful to evidence your claims through reference to specific social research guidelines.
- Where are you going with this? Is the issue not either/ or re informed consent – surely that is a given – most social science ethics frameworks arguing it is essential. Is the issue rather – how one defines it – and that more recent discussion within the social sciences recognises that informed consent is an on-going discussion etc rather than a 'one-off' – the issue then is how this is managed a/ by the formal requirements of ethics committees and b/ at the level of your discussion with LD stakeholders / the LD community themselves and individual co-researchers/ the researched – my view is that you could be working up to elaborating a more nuanced understanding of ethics and consent that is situated in research practice (and is relational).
- Ref?
- X, this is a much stronger section, because it is firmly rooted in the academic literature.
- This might fit with what I have suggested in my previous comment – but needs elaborating – how do these authors demonstrate the 'flip'/ 'empowerment' etc - is it another hegemony or do they provide evidence?
- This is interesting. How is their info conceptually different to what a 'bio-ethically' framed ethics committee suggests?
- What are they proposing instead? Covert? Uniformed? Or a more nuanced means of understanding the process?
- Example?

- Example?
- Is this an ethical conundrum that needs discussion. How does it fit with your overall argument?
- Another good section X – balanced and well-referenced.
- Not sure I fully understand this.
- This is a very interesting point and example from your own work. Can you draw on the literature here and explore its relevance to the overall argument.
- I think these are all interesting points but I would take issue with these practices as a priori detrimental – yes they can ‘feel’ disruptive (to us – not sure about to research participants – evidence would be useful here) but if we are going to balance and check researcher power and have institutional safeguards these are always going to be necessary/or some creative solution – recorded verbal consent??. Surely it is about when and how they are introduced – is the argument about how forms/ consenting process are presented, explained, managed – coming back to my argument previously about ethics as ‘relational’ and on-going.
- This last section again feels a little on the polemical side. Ensure claims are evidenced and well-referenced.
- Agree – but again needs un-packing

Appendix 9: Clara's Complete Conference Paper

Submission to Business Communications Symposium, June 2013

The Creation - and Creativity - of Silence in Study Team Working

USE Business School, UK

While conversations and talk have been studied as a creative part of collaborative knowledge creation and robust decision-making (e.g. Tsoukas, 2009; Hargadon and Bechky, 2006; Janis, 1972; Nemeth and Goncalo, 2011), the performative role played by silence - that is, the withholding of information, ideas or opinions within a group - is comparatively under-researched. This paper will present some early analysis of empirical research on the discourse of silence and self-censorship, and its effects on study delivery, in a partnership study team in the UK.

Theoretical background

In the last decade or so, a strand of literature in the field of organizational behaviour has presented employee silence as an impediment to the creative and constantly adaptive work which organizations need to do to remain competitive and relevant in the world (Perlow and Williams, 2003; Greenberg and Edwards, 2009). Silence here is not seen simply as an absence of sound but a conscious choice of withholding which is attributed to an individual agent. The primary focus in this literature has been to understand the individual cognitive psychological (e.g. Liang et al, 2012) or organizational cultural variables (e.g. Morrison and Milliken, 2000) which are involved in the choice between silence and voice. The underlying aim essentially reflects the desire for productive dialogue and a state of relational, rather than calculated, engagement (Tsoukas, 2009).

While there are notable exceptions in which different forms of silence are analysed in situated, qualitative ways (Fletcher and Watson, 2007; Bell et al, 2003), the majority of empirical studies have relied on an ontological framework in which individuals are static, unitary, rational beings and the acts of silence and voice are finalised, post hoc reports unconnected to narrative context (e.g. Morrison et al, 2011). The relational processes through which silence, and silent employees, develop has received little empirical attention.

Yet as Janis (1972) and Greenberg and Edwards (2009: Preface) acknowledge, the problematic effects ascribed to silence may just as well be attributed to people not listening to others rather than those same others not speaking up. The "problem" within the organizing process may in fact lie elsewhere, in the perlocutionary hearing rather than the illocutionary speaking of speech acts. How silence

becomes created, and what role it performs, therefore seem to be relevant questions.

The research focus

My PhD research uses a relational approach to throw light on how a particular discourse of silence and self-censorship not only develops through a study lifecycle but also influences the study outcomes.

Drawing on Bakhtin's theories of polyphony, the ethnographic research explores the emergent accounts of self-censorship told by the members of a partnership study over its first six months of planning and delivery. Research data includes video recordings and transcripts of meetings, participant observer fieldnotes and individual interviews with study team members.

The study, regarding the future use of a high-profile urban greenspace site, is being delivered through collaboration between a university department, a local council and a strategic county council. The work is framed by participants as an experimental, innovative approach using a "co-design" model for community engagement. As the study unfolds, the university team position themselves, as the experts in co-design, as needing freedom from council insistence on concrete objectives: "co-design can't be controlled like that". The county council officers attempt to be more involved and to collaborate more closely but they are undermined by the local council representative's deferral to the university team leader. The county officers subsequently cease trying to influence the study. Attempts towards relational engagement make way for a state of calculated engagement. participants' social dialogue.

Appendix 10: A written text submitted by Valerie – an academic article

Commentary

Public engagement through the development of science-based computer games: The James Trust's 'Gamify Your PhD' initiative

Abstract

New developments in digital technologies are enabling scientists to explore novel avenues of engagement beyond face-to-face approaches. The 'gamification' of science through the creation of computer games based on scientific research, is part of this trend. Recently, the James Trust held a competitive 'hackfest' called 'Gamify Your PhD'. Six PhD students were selected to develop their research into a computer game with the help of professional games developers. I was able to observe this event with the aim of exploring the collaboration between scientists and games developers, and how science-based computer games can be used to engage the wider public.

Key Words

Computer games, gamification, public engagement, biomedical sciences, hackfest

The development of online science engagement

The development and widespread adoption of Web 2.0 technologies, tools and platforms have created opportunities for online participation and novel avenues for public engagement with the sciences (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012; Holliman, 2008, 2010). Social technologies are also changing the way knowledge is collected, shared and organised, giving non-scientists as well as scientists, increasing opportunities to contribute and participate in scientific research (Delfanti, 2010). The proliferation of science blogs, science-based podcasts, and online citizen science studies such as GalaxyZoo illustrate this trend (Birch, 2010; Hand, 2010; Lintott et al., 2008). More recently, there has been the development of 'scientific discovery games' or 'games with a purpose' such as Foldit which encourage collaboration between scientists and citizens in order to solve real-world research problems (Bohannon, 2009).

Using the sciences as a vehicle to create computer games, or 'gamification', is an area that has been receiving attention from a number of institutions involved in the public communication of science (Robertson, 2011). Computer games now rival television and films as a source of entertainment, with millions of active gamers around the world (Spence & Feng, 2010). Games

appeal to a wide range of individuals, and it is now becoming clear, that the existing gamer stereotype of an adolescent or young male, is not wholly accurate (ESA, 2012; IAB, 2011). Given the broadening appeal of computer games, the growing and diversifying audience, and the increasing number of games played with mobile phone apps, making use of games appears to be a natural progression in the public engagement of science. Recently, the James Trust, the UK's Royal Institution and the Science Museum in London have developed games in order to engage and educate, and bring the research process to a potentially large audience without the need for physically attending an event.

Gamify Your PhD

As part of the James Trust's exploration of gaming as a vehicle for public engagement, an initiative was launched in July 2012 called 'Gamify Your PhD'. PhD students in the biomedical sciences were invited to submit proposals outlining how their area of research could be transformed into an entertaining computer game. Six finalists were selected from approximately sixty applications. In addition to PhD scientists, games developers were invited to take part, and six companies were selected from a total of fourteen who applied to partner the students. The event took the form of a competitive two-day 'hackfest' in early September 2012. Each team (which was composed of four-to-six individuals) was given two days to develop a game that was based on the student's PhD research.

At the end of the two-day period, each team gave a presentation where the game was demonstrated and the underlying science outlined, the game deemed to be the most successful by a panel of judges received funding from the James Trust to develop the winning idea further, with a view to launching the game publicly. This funding permitted an extra five days of time with the developers.

The organisers of the hackfest had a number of review criteria that had to be met by the participants, and ultimately determined the success of each team. The following brief instructions were provided at the beginning of the hackfest.

"We are seeking great games that integrate the science into the game. This integration should not be at the expense of great gameplay, but the two should co-exist at least and amplify each other at best. Players should engage with the science through gameplay, but the games do not need to be explicitly educational.

The game needs to be fun to play. We are not looking to develop a 'worthy' game; it should be fun in its own right.

It should have the capacity to be developed/evolved/polished – the presentations should talk about how this might happen. Note that there are resources for about 5 days more development to scale up the game. Is the game too ambitious for the resources? It is essential that at the end of the development period the game is 'finished', i.e. ready to be played by the public.

The game should be a great example of what can be achieved when games and science meet. The game should be of an easily digitally distributed form; games that can be easily distributed to a wide audience are the aim. That is not to say all games have to be family games and so avoid adult themes; but we are looking for mass appeal (James Trust, 2012)."

Observations of the Hackfest

I asked if I could attend the hackfest as an observer. I am currently exploring opportunities for public engagement, particularly the development of online citizen science studies and 'scientific discovery' games, as part of my doctoral research. My main aims while attending this event were to explore how scientists and games developers collaborated, whether there is a 'trade-off' between scientific accuracy and entertainment, and if scientific games can provide an opportunity to engage the wider public and promote dialogue.

As an observer at this event, I was not directly involved in any of the deliberations or discussions relating to the development of the games. I did make field notes on how the groups worked together, what aspects of the development were key or problematic, and how the approaches differed between the groups and over the course of the hackfest. I had brief discussions with the scientists concerning their views toward the public engagement of their work in general, and how games may fit into their wider engagement activities. I also had discussions with some of the developers to ask them about some of the challenges involved in developing a game based on actual scientific research.

From observing the initial discussions between the scientists and the developers it was clear that the main challenge was going to be the successful integration of science within a suitable gaming environment, and a balance had to be struck between the level of scientific detail and accuracy, and making the game entertaining and fun. Decisions had to be made early on with regard to the level of complexity of the game, how much scientific information was incorporated into the game design or game tutorial. Once these decisions were made, the developers set to work on the

design, graphics, and game mechanics. In a couple of the groups, initial ideas for the game had to be abandoned, as the game concept simply did not fit with the scientific remit. In most of the groups, processes had to be simplified and parameters narrowed, to keep the level of complexity manageable, and to create a game that was easy to comprehend. In most of the groups the scientists remained closely involved in helping to guide this aspect of the development.

From the discussions I had with the scientists, it appeared that none of them had used games as an engagement tool before. A few of them regularly played games themselves and all were open-minded as to the potential of games to communicate their area of scientific research (hence their involvement in this event). Five of the scientists were involved in biomedical science on a molecular and genetic level, while one scientist was researching an area of medical ethics relating to the treatment of addiction. Several of the games developers had worked with the James Trust previously, so had some experience of developing games based on scientific research.